

# MILITARY HISTORY

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Franklin's Tory Bastard  
Last Charge at Beersheba  
Capa: War in Focus  
Bloody Alexandria  
Agony of...Victory?  
Writing Army History

A *mujahedeen* rebel poses wearily during the 1979–89 Soviet War in Afghanistan

## AFGHAN QUAGMIRE

### Trapping the Soviet Bear

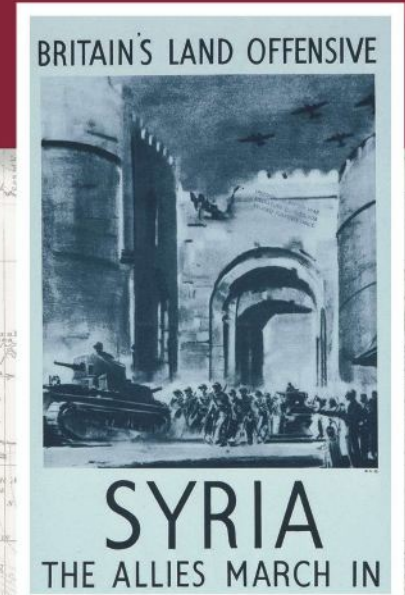
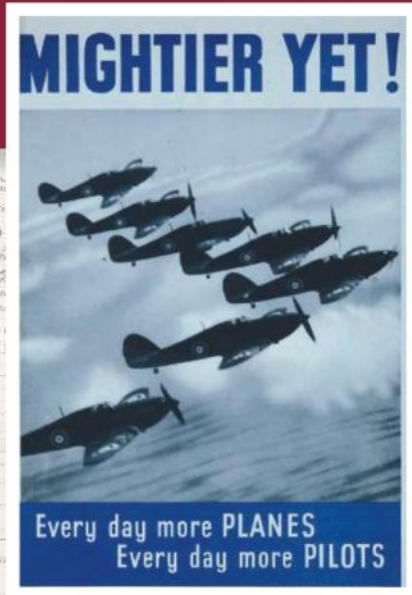


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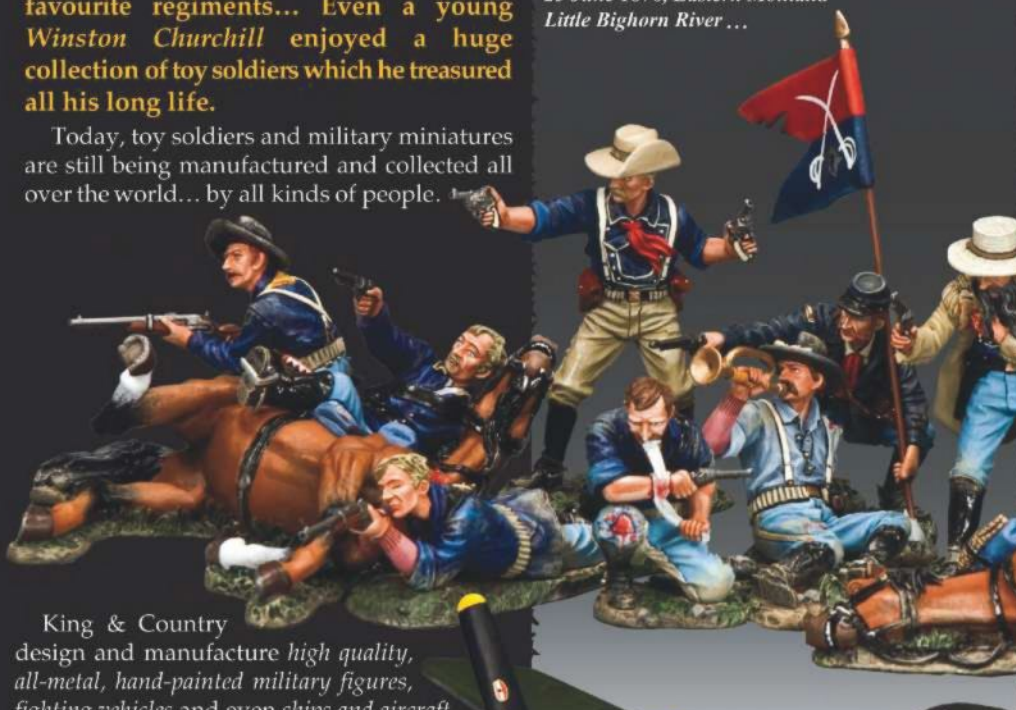
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ON THE COVER: POSING IN 1983 WITH KNIFE IN MOUTH AND A RIFLE SLUNG ACROSS HIS BACK, THIS AGED MUJAHEDDEEN REBEL EPITOMIZES THE HARDENED AFGHAN FIGHTER. (© MARK RICHARDS/ZUMA/CORBIS)

TOP: VITALY ARMAND/AP/GETTY IMAGES; RIGHT: HERITAGE AUCTION GALLERIES, DALLAS

The Cost of Victory, P. 26 ►



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BUY EXTRA BONDS

UNCLE SAM ROLLS UP HIS SLEEVES

Few people dispute the merits of defeating the Axis in World War II, but other victories give us pause, especially as the body counts and financial tally mount.

MILITARY HISTORY







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# MILITARY HISTORY

Vol. 30, No. 5

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## First Shot of World War I

On June 28, 1914, seven Serbian men, armed with bombs and pistols, waited on the streets of Sarajevo for a chance to kill Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Christopher Clark shares the details of the murder that sparked global conflict.



## Why Rome Fell

The vast empire that reigned supreme for more than two millennia crumbled in just a few short centuries. Our classical scholar, Richard A. Gabriel, relates the course of its decline.



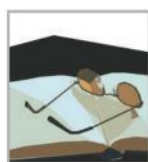
## The Making of General Winfield Scott

The young officer survived court-martial, a gentlemen's duel and the War of 1812 to become one of America's finest military commanders. Ron Soodalter tells us how.



## Interview

Author Eric Schlosser discusses the safety record of the nation's nuclear arsenal.



## Reviews

Contributor Dennis E. Showalter looks at the World War II armored clash at Kursk.



## Tools

The Webley & Scott Mk VI revolver was the British officer's sidearm of choice.



## Sound Off

Join an online debate or drop us an e-mail about what you've read in the magazine.

## Military History Reader Poll:

Name wars or campaigns whose victorious outcomes improved matters for one or both sides involved, as compared to wars or campaigns that would have been the worse all around had the "wrong side" won.

TOP TO BOTTOM: THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, EDITED BY CHARLES MACKAY, JAMES S. VIRTUE, LONDON, 1863; SHANE STEZELBERGER/THINKSTOCK



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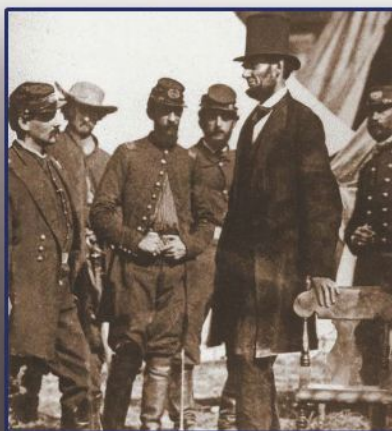
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## Who Is That Man on the Cover?



On the cover of the November 2013 *Military History* you show a photo of a soldier identified as “U.S. Army Sergeant Angelo Klonis at Saipan, July 1944.”

This is incorrect. The man shown is a Marine, and his name is PFC T.E. Underwood. The Saipan part is correct.

Gary Killean  
AKRON, OHIO

*Editor responds:* Several readers wrote in regarding the caption information on our November cover. We, too, initially thought the man in the photo was a Marine named

Underwood, as photographer W. Eugene Smith’s own film notes record, “I believe that the images 6–8 on Roll 10 on July 8, final days of Saipan Invasion, were 4th Division Marine PFC T.E. Underwood (24th Bat.) of St. Petersburg, Florida.” However, photo researchers, with the help of the Klonis family, had since identified the man in Smith’s image as Angelo Klonis. In 2002 the U.S. Postal Service agreed with that identification when it issued its Masters of American Photography stamp series, which included another image of the man by W. Eugene Smith on the same roll of film. Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images has recently updated its archive and also identifies the man as Klonis. Still, Klonis is not known to have served in the Pacific Theater during the war, and several readers questioned why an Army soldier would be wearing a Marine-style camouflage helmet

cover. That made us curious. A cursory online search turned up two pieces of evidence that the man in the cover image may indeed be Underwood and not Klonis. First is a headstone [www.findagrave.com]



in St. Petersburg, Fla., bearing the name Thomas E. Underwood, identified as a corporal in the 4th Marine Division who served in World War II and was killed on March 4, 1945, on Iwo

Jima. A year earlier the 4th Marines had fought the Battle of Saipan. Right time, right place, right name. But what about the face? On a website [www.1stbattalion24thmarines.com] honoring the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, who were on Saipan, we found an image (see above) of Thomas E. Underwood that could certainly be the man in Smith’s iconic photograph. Tell us your opinion. We’d like to correct the record and honor a brave fighting man.

### Why Rome Fell

I very much enjoyed Richard A. Gabriel’s article “Why Rome Fell” [September 2013]. It was a great refresher piece and taught me new facts, especially how agriculture played a role in the development of the German state. I am surprised, however, that neither the Antonine Plague nor Christianity was mentioned, even in passing. Edward Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* cited these two major events, as did Zosimus in the early sixth century.

First, Rome’s inability to defend its borders was in large part due to plague and the inability to conscript new soldiers from the Italian peninsula. This was evidenced by the postponement of a major campaign against the Marcomanni in 169, secondary to a shortage of troops. Second, by approving Christianity as the state religion, Rome directly undermined its religious traditions. The Christian belief in one God—who was not the emperor—weakens the au-

thority and credibility of the emperor as more funds went to the church and less to the state.

Dr. John Kiriakakis  
UNION, N.J.

*Rick Gabriel responds:* The figure of 5 million dead during the Antonine Plague (165–180) is only a guess, based on Galen’s account, about which demographers cannot be certain. Even if we accept it—that is, 5 million dead of a population of 60 million over 15 years—that is hardly enough to make a dent in Roman military manpower. Roman military garrisons were renowned for their sanitation, hospitals, medical expertise and nutritious rations, all factors that would have mitigated the death rate in the army itself. Rome may have had difficulty filling its ranks, but it was not due to the plague (probably smallpox, which requires direct contact to spread).

Christianity was initially a religion of the Roman urban elite, with the overwhelming majority of Roman citizens remaining pagans until well into the fourth century. Emperor Theodosius I (r. 379–396) declared war on paganism with a two-decade persecution of its priests and followers, and the destruction of its libraries, archives and temples. Over the next two centuries the Roman state persecuted the various heretical Christian



sects that sprang up all over the empire. It was such persecution that weakened the Byzantine empire, not a voluntary turning away from traditional Roman religions.

## Remember *Lancastria*

The November issue *What We Learned* ["From Dunkirk, 1940," by Stephan Wilkinson] features Dunkirk. This caused me to wonder once again, *What happened to Saint-Nazaire?* I have never read an account in any American publication of the evacuation that took place from the Breton port and only one in a British publication. During this evacuation Britain suffered her greatest naval disaster ever when RMS *Lancastria* sank in a matter of minutes after being hit by German bombs. *Lancastria*, a Cunard passenger liner requisitioned by the Royal Navy, was estimated at the time to have had at least 6,000 aboard, consisting of troops and civilian refugees. There were only 2,477 survivors.

My father was one of the British troops among the casualties. He was buried in a mass grave at the village of Le Clion-sur-Mer with others who had gone down with the ship.

Michael A. Sawyer  
WEST JEFFERSON, N.C.

In the November 2013 issue Robert Guttman reviews the book *Death in the Baltic* and makes comparisons of the losses of *Titanic* and *Lusitania* with *Wilhelm Gustloff*. A much more valid comparison would be the loss of RMS *Lancastria* during Operation Ariel on June 17, 1940, at Saint-Nazaire, France. While the official guesstimate is around 4,000 dead, some estimates run up to 9,000.

Ronald Nass  
ELLICOTT CITY, MD.

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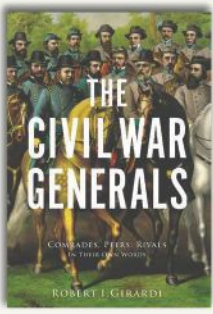
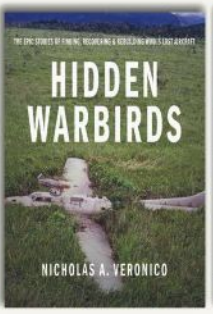
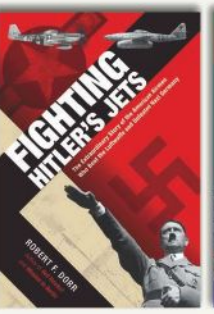
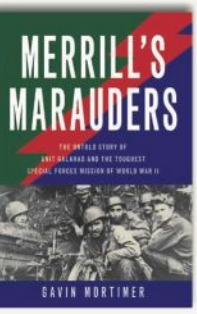
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King Richard, hastily buried after the 1485 Battle of Bosworth, will have a proper ceremony.

## Britons to Foot Regal \$1.5 Million Reinterment for King Richard III

Slain in battle five centuries ago and buried ignominiously in a pit, Richard III will finally receive the funeral rites due a monarch. British officials have announced plans to install a raised tomb within Leicester Cathedral [[www.cathedral.leicester.anglican.org](http://www.cathedral.leicester.anglican.org)] and conduct a pricey \$1.5 million reinterment ceremony for this last Plantagenet king of England, whose unmarked grave was discovered in fall 2012 beneath a city parking lot. University of Leicester [[www.le.ac.uk](http://www.le.ac.uk)] archaeologists were excavating the ruins of the 12th century Greyfriars monastery when they unearthed Richard's skeletal remains. The reburial is planned for early 2014.

On Aug. 22, 1485, at the Battle of Bosworth Field, Richard—age 32 with just two years on the throne—became the last English king slain in combat, falling to the forces of future Tudor monarch Henry VII. Richard's death ended both the rule of the House of York and the 30-

year Wars of the Roses. Monks at neighboring Greyfriars buried Richard's battle-scarred body without coffin or shroud. Partisan Tudor scholars posthumously smeared Richard, who appears most unflatteringly as a hunchbacked tyrant in William Shakespeare's eponymous play. They also fingered Richard in the disappearance of his preteen nephews Edward and Richard, aka the "Princes in the Tower."

Officials in Leicester, banking on the royal tomb to boost tourism, have approved designs for a \$6 million Richard III museum and visitor center, scheduled to open around the time of the reinterment—that is, if it is allowed to proceed. The Plantagenet Alliance [[www.kingrichardcampaign.org.uk](http://www.kingrichardcampaign.org.uk)], a group of Richard's descendants, has filed a legal challenge to the Leicester burial site, stating that York Minster [[www.yorkminster.org](http://www.yorkminster.org)] seems a more fitting resting place for the last Yorkist king. And so the wars continue.

**'Every tale condemns me for a villain. Perjury, perjury, in the highest degree'**

—William Shakespeare, Richard III

### DISPATCHES

#### Stamp Marks 1813 Battle of Lake Erie

The U.S. Postal Service [[www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)] has issued a War of 1812: Battle of Lake Erie "forever stamp" to mark the bicentennial of the Sept. 10, 1813, clash in which U.S.



Navy Master Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry handed the British Royal Navy a stunning defeat. The stamp features William Henry Powell's 1873 painting *Battle of Lake Erie*, which depicts Perry famously transferring his flag from USS *Lawrence* to USS *Niagara*; the original painting hangs in the U.S. Capitol.

#### Film Depicts the Monuments Men

A new drama—set for a December release and based on Robert M. Edsel's 2009 book *The Monuments Men*—portrays the real-life Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives program, a group of museum curators and art



historians who recovered Nazi-plundered art from World War II. (See "Lost & Found" in the July 2012 *Military History*.) The film [[www.monumentsmenmovie.com](http://www.monumentsmenmovie.com)] stars George Clooney (who co-wrote and directed) and Matt Damon.



## Shipwreck Yields \$70M of Silver

Last summer Florida-based Odyssey Marine Exploration [[www.shipwreck.net](http://www.shipwreck.net)] retrieved an additional 60 tons of silver bullion from the wreck of the World War II British merchant ship SS *Gairsoppa*. The find brings



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Odyssey's take from the wreck to 110 tons of silver worth some \$70 million. In February 1941 the German submarine *U-101* torpedoed *Gairsoppa* off the coast of Ireland; it lies in three miles of water. Odyssey's salvage contract with the U.K. pays 80 percent of the haul.

## German President Visits Massacre Site

German President Joachim Gauck (below right), with French President François Hollande (at left), recently



PHILIPPE WOJAZER/POOL/EPFL/LANDOV

visited the former village of Oradour-sur-Glane, France, site of the worst Nazi massacre of civilians on French soil. On June 10, 1944, in a mistaken reprisal attack, *Waffen SS* troops murdered 642 of the town's men, women and children. After the war the village was left intact as a memorial [[www.oradour.org/en](http://www.oradour.org/en)]. Gauck's visit to the site was the first by a German president.

## DOD Honors Decorated Korean War Packhorse

In July at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Tri-  
angle, Va., the Department of  
Defense [[www.defense.gov](http://www.defense.gov)]  
dedicated a statue of Sergeant

Reckless [[www.sgtreckless.com](http://www.sgtreckless.com)], a Mongolian mare used by the U.S. Marine Corps during the Korean War. In 1952 5th Marines Lieutenant Eric Pederson purchased Reckless for \$250 from a Korean stableboy at the Seoul Race Park. Named for her platoon, dubbed the "Reckless Rifles," the mare carried am-



KATHY REESE/US MARINE CORPS

munition, evacuated the wounded and shielded Marines from enemy fire. Ultimately promoted to staff sergeant, Reckless earned two Purple Hearts and gained national acclaim after appearing in the *Saturday Evening Post*. She died at Camp Pendleton, Calif., in 1968.

Sculpted by artist Jocelyn Russell, the bronze includes a lock of Reckless' tail in its base. The unveiling fell during the 60th anniversary of the Korean War armistice.

**'It was obvious the Marines loved her'**  
—Marine Corps Commandant Randolph Pate

## Germany Opens Last Russian War Cemetery

The German War Graves Commission [[www.volksbund.de](http://www.volksbund.de)] has opened its last big World War II-era cemetery in Russia, even as recovery teams continue to track down hundreds of thousands of German war dead on the Eastern Front. The Volksbund has reinterred 30,513 *Wehrmacht* casualties in the new cemetery near Smolensk, with another 40,000 graves pending. Over the past two decades Germany has built 20 such massive war cemeteries in Russia, holding the graves of nearly 800,000 of its Eastern Front dead. The Volksbund has pinpointed the remains of a further 400,000 German soldiers and will reinter as many as feasible.



AKO IMAGES/VALERT MELNIKOVA/RIA NOVOSTI

## WAR RECORD

■ **December 18, 1916:** The Battle of Verdun ends, with French troops retaking lost ground from the Germans in a three-day offensive. The longest battle in World War I, it is one of the costliest victories (see P. 26), with an estimated 700,000 casualties.

■ **December 19, 1941:** Italian navy divers using manned torpedoes attack the British Royal Navy ships HMS *Queen Elizabeth* and HMS *Valiant*, at anchor off Alexandria, Egypt (see P. 42). Both vessels are out of action for months.

■ **January 8, 1776:** Patriot militiamen place William Franklin—staunch Loyalist, governor of New Jersey and illegitimate son of Ben Franklin (see P. 34)—under house arrest at his Perth Amboy mansion. He spends nearly three years as a POW.

■ **January 13, 1842:** Army surgeon Dr. William Brydon arrives at a British outpost in Jalalabad, Afghanistan (see P. 44). He is the lone survivor of a 16,500-strong Anglo-Indian force massacred by Afghan tribesmen in the Khyber Pass during a retreat from Kabul.

■ **January 15, 1939:** Robert Capa (see P. 54) travels the Barcelona to Tarragona road photographing refugees fleeing the city as Francisco Franco's forces close in. Fascist planes strafe the hapless columns as Capa documents the exodus.



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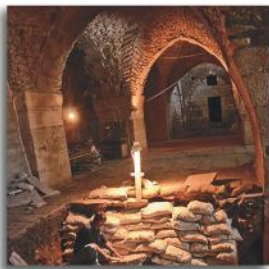
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## Crusader-era Site Reopens to Public

The Israel Antiquities Authority [[www.antiquities.org.il](http://www.antiquities.org.il)] has completed a 13-year excavation of the Middle East's largest Crusader-era hospital, in the



COURTESY ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

Christian Quarter of Jerusalem's walled Old City. Built in the 11th century by the Knights Hospitaller, the building spans more than 150,000 square feet, with raised ceilings and impressive pillars and ribbed vaults. The site will reopen in 2014 as a visitor center and restaurant.

## English Heritage Adds Civil War Sites

English Heritage [[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)] has added the first new battlefields to its registry in nearly two decades after researchers pinpointed a



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cluster of English Civil War sites near Lostwithiel, Cornwall. On those fields, in fall 1644, Royalist forces led by King Charles I pursued and clashed with Parliamentarians under Robert Devereux, 3rd Earl of Essex. The Royalists defeated the heavily outnumbered Parliamentarians, thus securing south-west England for Charles.



DETROIT PUBLISHING COMPANY/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The site will retain its post-battle appearance and educate visitors about the 1815 clash.

## Conservators Begin Restoration Of Waterloo's Hougoumont Farm

With funding from the British and Belgian governments and private donors, the volunteer-led Project Hougoumont [[www.projecthougoumont.com](http://www.projecthougoumont.com)] has launched its multi-million-dollar restoration of the walled farm and château that anchored the Duke of Wellington's Anglo-allied line and proved pivotal in the defeat of Napoléon Bonaparte's French forces at Waterloo, in present-day Belgium. Conservators will return Hougoumont to its post-battle appearance, without replacing destroyed or demolished buildings. They plan to wrap up by spring 2015, in time for the bicentennial of the June 18, 1815, battle.

By striking at Hougoumont early in the clash, Napoléon hoped to draw Wellington's reserves into the fight, then strike at his left and separate the Anglo-allied force from a Prussian army under Gebhard von Blücher—classic divide and conquer. The French commander didn't count on the resolve of the men

at Hougoumont, who endured heavy shelling and repulsed repeated French assaults. Late in the evening Wellington and Blücher counter-attacked and drove Napoléon from the field.

Spearheaded two years ago by Arthur Wellesley, 8th Duke of Wellington, Project Hougoumont has drawn the patronage of other Waterloo descendants, including French Prince Charles Napoléon and Prussian Prince Dennis Wilhelm von Blücher und Wahlstatt. The conservation team will transform the Great Barn into an educational center; renovate another barn to house a permanent exhibition about the battle; restore the perimeter walls and North Gate; open the chapel as a place of remembrance; and convert the gardener's house into an apartment for visiting Waterloo scholars and enthusiasts. And despite local opposition, Hougoumont will finally bear a memorial to the British soldiers who fought at Waterloo.

**'The battle turned upon the closing of the gates at Hougoumont'**

—Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington



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## Japan Launches Massive Warship

Japan recently launched its largest warship since World War II: the flat-top helicopter destroyer *Izumo*, with an 820-foot flight deck and room to carry nine helicopters. Under Article 9 of its postwar constitution Japan may only use its armed forces [[www.mod.go.jp](http://www.mod.go.jp)] for



JAPAN MARITIME SELF-DEFENSE FORCE

national defense, but critics contend *Izumo* could be converted to a tactical carrier. Japan's launch comes amid the rekindling of tensions with China, particularly over a group of islands known as the Senkaku (or Diaoyutai in China).

## Plans to Honor U.S. Civil War Britons

The American Civil War British Memorial Association [[www.acwbma.com](http://www.acwbma.com)] is seeking donations to erect two monuments—one on



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either side of the Atlantic—to recognize the 300,000 British-born Americans who fought in the Civil War. The proposal calls for a stone marker at Pamplin Historical Park [[www.pamplinpark.org](http://www.pamplinpark.org)] in Petersburg, Va., and a second proposed monument in Liverpool, England, home to the wartime U.S. consulate as well as many Confederate sympathizers.

## POW's Lost Wartime Ring Makes it Home

It was a reunion seven decades in the making. In 1945 2nd Lt. David C. Cox, a starving U.S. airman in captivity at Stalag VII-A, near Moosburg, Germany, traded a gold ring to a fellow POW for a couple of chocolate bars. Engraved with a propeller and wings, the signet ring had been a gift from Cox's parents to mark his 1942 commission. Copilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress, Cox had flown more than a dozen sorties and earned the Distinguished Flying Cross before being shot down over Germany in July 1943. He was liberated in April 1945, sans ring.

After the war a hungry Russian soldier traded the band to the Hungarian owners of a Serbian pub, who handed it down through the generations. This summer their great-grandson, Martin Kiss, with help from a friend, tracked down the Cox family in Raleigh, N.C., and returned the ring. Full circle.



GERRY BROOME/ASSOCIATED PRESS

**MOTHER & FATHER TO DAVID C. COX GREENSBORO, NC**  
—Inscription on POW's lost ring

## Doomed Spanish Fort Found in Appalachians

University of Michigan [[www.umich.edu](http://www.umich.edu)] researchers have unearthed the ruins of Fort San Juan, a Spanish garrison founded in 1567 in the Appalachian foothills near present-day Morganton, N.C. The first of six such forts built by Captain Juan Pardo during a Spanish push to colonize the South, San Juan is the oldest-known European fortification in the U.S. interior. The forts stood less than 18 months

before being overrun and destroyed by local Indians. The researchers were excavating the surrounding Indi-



COURTESY EXPLORING JOARA PROJECT

an settlement of Joara when they stumbled on traces of the fort, including its moat, a corner bastion and the graveled entryway.

## WAR FOR SALE

If you've got the bucks, sellers worldwide have a war relic for you. Following are a few particularly tempting buys, though shipping may not be included.

■ **M18 Hellcat:** Field your own rolling arsenal for \$315K to \$345K. Northeast Military Vehicle Services [[www.site.ww2mv.com](http://www.site.ww2mv.com)] is hawking two restored World War II M18 Hellcat tank destroyers. Of 2,500 made, only about a half-dozen are known to survive.

■ **M1901 Escort Wagon:** An eBay [[www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)] seller in Southern California listed a restored, horse-drawn M1901 U.S. Army escort wagon. Asking price: \$12K. Few examples survive of the vehicle, which saw heavy use in World War I.

■ **Messerschmitt Bf 109E:** Platinum Fighter Sales [[www.platinumfighters.com](http://www.platinumfighters.com)] offers a rare World War II Messerschmitt Bf 109E (Wk. No. 3579), for \$3.75M. It is one of two original, still-flying examples of the fighter.

■ **Tube Station Bunker:** The U.K. Ministry of Defense [[www.gov.uk/mod](http://www.gov.uk/mod)] has listed an odd property: a World War II command bunker within a former London Underground station at Brompton Road, Kensington. The building and tunnels are expected to fetch at least \$15M.



# Weider Reader

A sampling of decisive moments, remarkable adventures, memorable characters, surprising encounters and great ideas from our sister magazines

## WILD WEST

### Donner Party Aftermath



In the winter of 1846–47, 81 members of the Donner Party were trapped by snow in California's Sierra Nevada. Relief came in several waves for those west-

bound emigrants, but not before 36 had died and about 20 of the 45 survivors had resorted to cannibalism. Others later came across the Donners' lake camp. Read more in "Donner Party Cannibalism: Did They or Didn't They?" by Kristin Johnson, in the December 2013 Wild West.

In June 1847 Brig. Gen. Stephen W. Kearny went east overland by way of what is now called Donner Pass. When he and his entourage reached the lake camp, they were horrified at what they found. One of the party, Edwin Bryant, wrote: "Strewn around the cabins were dislocated and broken bones—skulls (in some instances sawed asunder with care for the purpose of extracting the brains)—human skeletons, in short, in every variety of mutilation. A more revolting and appalling spectacle I never witnessed."

The general ordered the remains buried. Five of the men gathered them into the Breen cabin and set it afire, but it was only partially consumed. In September 1847 travelers noted that human remains again littered the ground at the lake camp, presumably dragged about by scavengers. Over the next five years passersby recorded gruesome sights at "Cannibal Camp"—scattered limbs, bones smashed to access the marrow, skulls sawn open. Some stopped to rebury the remains; others took pieces as souvenirs.

## MHQ

### Custer's Ego Takes Charge



In 1876 a supremely confident Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer led his 7th U.S. Cavalry Regiment into battle against a massive Indian force near the Little

Bighorn River. Paul Andrew Hutton considers, "Could Custer Have Won?" in the Winter 2013 MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History.

"The best cavalry in Uncle Sam's service," Custer had boasted of his 7th Cavalry in 1874. Created in the post-Civil War army reorganization to meet the needs of Western expansion, the 7th was viewed as elite, and Custer's appointment as lieutenant colonel reflected that. A brevet general at 23, he had been the darling of the Northern press during the Civil War—"the Boy General," reporters anointed him as they wrote of his flowing curls and furious charges, from Brandy Station to Appomattox, where he accepted the Rebel flag of surrender.

Hard campaigning on the southern Plains in 1867–69 had won the regiment and its commander enviable reputations as Indian fighters. Unlike many other officers, Custer relished that role, adopting the fringed buckskin of the frontiersman. In national magazine articles and an 1874 memoir he celebrated his adventures. Custer wanted to be seen as a rugged hero, heir to the mantle of Boone and Crockett.

## AVIATION HISTORY

### First Blue Max Ace



As a leader of Germany's deadly "Fokker Scourge," Max Immelmann almost single-handedly took on Britain's Royal Flying Corps. Don Hollway chronicles

"The Eagle of Lille" in the November 2013 issue of Aviation History.

It didn't take long for Ensign Max Immelmann of the Imperial German Flying Corps, piloting unarmed two-seater reconnaissance planes over the Western Front, to learn that the enemy was shooting more than photographs. The Farman MF.11 diving at him during a June 1915 mission was already obsolete. Immelmann's LVG B.I was a generation ahead—sleeker, faster, more powerful, higher flying. But the Farman had one thing the LVG didn't: a machine gun.

"Suddenly I heard the familiar *tack-tack-tack-tack*...and saw little holes appear in our right wing," recalled Immelmann, who held course for his observer to finish his photography until the enemy's bullets began striking metal. "If the brute shoots up my engine, there is nothing more to be done!"

Diving away, the German pilot nursed the LVG home to Douai. Squadron mates found one round had gone completely through its engine bed and another had nicked the main fuselage spar; had it broken, the whole plane would have folded up in midair. For saving his aircraft, Immelmann received the Iron Cross 2nd Class. He had also learned an important lesson: "It is a horrible feeling to have to wait until one is perhaps hit, without being able to fire a shot oneself!"



## AMERICAN HISTORY

### Wilderness Court-Martial



On their epic Western expedition Lewis and Clark had few options when it came to maintaining order among rough subordinates unaccustomed to military discipline. Anthony Brandt recalls their journey in “Decision Point,” in the December 2013 issue of American History.

On Aug. 18, 1804, Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark court-martialed Moses Reed, who had deserted their Corps of Discovery and been caught. Leniency was not possible—as veteran Army officers themselves, Lewis and Clark knew that any dissension in the ranks threatened to sabotage the entire expedition and cast doubts on their ability to lead it. At the trial Reed confessed and was sentenced to run the gantlet of the entire Corps four times.

Courts-martial were not frequent events, but they occurred often enough and, as the expedition worked its way up the Missouri River, men unused to military discipline came to understand it and adjust to it.

Lewis and Clark were after a Corps with a single spirit, devoted to its mission with one mind. The mission was certainly worthy of devotion. They were making history with a capital H, crossing North America to find a route to the Pacific Ocean. Turning a bunch of wildly individualistic, independent frontiersmen, plus some of the least disciplined members of the little U.S. Army’s frontier forces, into the astonishingly effective Corps of Discovery is one of the great feats of American leadership—and one of the less celebrated of Lewis and Clark’s accomplishments.

## WORLD WAR II

### Stuck in the Sandbox



Austrian writer Max Reisch had spent a decade as an adventurer when he joined the Wehrmacht. He ran an Afrika Korps motor pool that included his personal Flitzer—as the Germans called jeeps—and a salvaged British artillery transporter. Leading from the Flitzer with his sidekick, Major Kössler, Reisch describes a desert-scrounging foray. Read more of Max Reisch’s recollection in “Sand Trap,” in the November/December 2013 issue of World War II.

What about that gray streak on the horizon? Why bother? We drove on in silence, followed by the transporter, but after a couple of minutes Kössler insisted, “We’ve got to go and look.”

His tone was so urgent that I swung the vehicle and set our sights on the streak. It grew larger and broke up into small dots. Kössler took a long look through the field glasses and handed them to me. “Amazing, isn’t it?”

He was right: vehicles, too many to count.

Or was it an illusion? I spurred on the Flitzer and soon there was no doubt. Scattered over several miles lay vehicles, empty and abandoned, all British.

Seized with a wild joy, we accelerated until we were right in among the British vehicles. There was a terrible bang and pieces of rubber and metal flew around our ears. The Flitzer skidded to a halt. Where there had been a left wheel and an axle, there were now only fragments of steel and tinplate. Everything was deathly still except for the pounding in our ears.

Mines! I remembered the transporter, and here it came, lumbering along, peaceful and unconcerned as befitted its role as the elephant of the desert.

## AMERICA'S CIVIL WAR

### McClellan’s Final Orders



After his failure to pursue retreating Rebels following the Battle of Antietam and continued disagreements with Lincoln and his administration, Maj. Gen. George McClellan was relieved of command of the Army of the Potomac. Sure, the president could fire him. But would he go in peace? Catherine Whitteburg unfolds the drama in “Patriot’s Act,” in the November 2013 issue of America’s Civil War.

Heavy snow had been pounding the Army of the Potomac for hours when Brig. Gen. Catharinus P. Buckingham’s train arrived in Salem, Va. on Nov. 7, 1862. Fierce as the blizzard was—particularly for that time of year—the orders Buckingham carried from the capital threatened to trigger an even more dangerous storm.

It had been two days since President Abraham Lincoln had signed the orders removing Maj. Gen. George McClellan from command of the army, McClellan’s conflicts with the administration having finally come to a head. “Little Mac,” as his troops fondly called him, was to depart for Trenton, N.J., and await further orders; Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside was to take control of the army.

It was not the first, nor would it be the last, change of command for the Army of the Potomac. But Little Mac was not like other generals, and some of his superiors in Washington worried he would not go quietly. What’s more, they feared that if McClellan resisted, his worshipful troops might fall in line right behind him.

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## Robert J. Dalessandro: Writing Army History

**E**ach branch of the U.S. military has a department tasked with researching and writing the official histories of its parent service's organization and operations. The U.S. Army Center of Military History [[www.history.army.mil](http://www.history.army.mil)], on the grounds of historic Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., collects the history for the nation's largest branch. Perhaps best known for its massive, 78-volume series *The United States Army in World War II*—widely known by scholars and amateur military historians as the “Green Books”—CMH has also produced histories and special studies pertaining to each of the nation's armed conflicts. Chief of Military History Robert J. Dalessandro, a retired Army colonel who in 2011 became CMH's civilian director, recently spoke with Military History about his organization and the challenges of writing military history in the 21st century.

### How and when was CMH organized?

The Center of Military History was created in 1942, by the decree of Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall. He wanted CMH to produce a series of histories that would be “lessons learned” pieces for senior leaders and would also show soldiers their contribution to an obviously globe-spanning conflict. These first documents were known as the *Army in Action* series.

The most important thing that grew out of that series was the deployment of historians to the various theaters of conflict. Among them was S.L.A. Marshall, who helped promote using interviews with leaders and soldiers as a way to supplement the gathering and archiving of official reports. The tradition of deploying military historians continues today.

**“We tell both the good and the bad. That’s one of CMH’s strengths, and that’s why many of our volumes are timeless.”**

### What tasks does CMH undertake?

In broad strokes, we write the official histories of the Army's operations; we record the lineage and honors of units at every level; we manage extensive archives and our own library; we provide staff support to the Army's leaders; and we oversee the Army Museum Program.

To accomplish those functions, CMH is or-

ganized into the Histories Division, which looks to all things historical; the Field Programs Division, which handles things like lineage and honors and the military history detachments; and the Museums Division, which handles museums Army-wide. About 200 people at Fort McNair take on all these tasks.

Additionally, independent Army history organizations outside Washington fall under CMH's oversight umbrella, including the Training and Doctrine Command Military History Office at Fort Eustis, Va., which manages the history operations at the services schools; the Forces Command

Military History Office at Fort Bragg, N.C., which handles the unit-level history programs; the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.; and the Army Heritage and Education Center at Carlisle Barracks, Pa.

### How objectively does CMH approach Army history?

We produce academically rigorous volumes that are balanced in their treatment of actions and individuals. It would be easy for us to say, “Everyone served, all served well, and all served honorably,” but we tell both the good and the bad. That's one of CMH's strengths, and that's why many of our volumes are timeless.

### Why do you think it's important for the Army to have a history program?

We are an Army at war and have been for one of the longest continuous periods in American history. We ask our men and women to put their lives on the line every day, and our history program helps them put their contribution in context. They are the most recent in a long line of soldiers, one that stretches back 236 years. It's important they know and understand the history and accomplishments of those who came before them.

### Are you already writing about Operations Enduring Freedom (in Afghanistan) and Iraqi Freedom?

We've already done several interim histories on specific, narrowly focused aspects of those operations that the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command can use as teaching aids. The Combat Studies Institute publishes what we call “occasional papers.” They just finished one in partnership with CMH and our military history detachments titled “Vanguard of Valor,” similar to our “Seven Firefights in Vietnam.” These interim studies look at the lower echelons of command and provide teaching vignettes for sergeants and lieutenants.



**Will CMH ultimately publish a comprehensive, multivolume history of those conflicts?**

We will. While we're still too close to the events to tell the larger, more complete story, we've already started planning what the structure of those volumes will be and are building the foundation. We're gathering and archiving data we'll need to accurately write those histories. So far our military history detachments have gathered some 100 terabytes of information.

**What is the greatest challenge you face in doing that?**

Even though Operation Desert Storm took place in the computer age, operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn [the American involvement in Iraq after 2010] are this nation's first major "digital age" conflicts. While there are still paper documents, most key command decisions are made and transmitted via e-mail. Documents are electronically updated daily, and older versions—those that would allow us to track evolving situations and understand the thinking of senior officers as they react to changing conditions—are often overwritten. We don't have the sort of hard-copy trail to follow we had for operations in World War II, Korea or Vietnam.

Here's another issue: Because the Army has done away with the long-standard morning report—the daily document that units produced about each soldier's status—it's actually harder for us to find information about the daily activities of an individual soldier in OEF, OIF or OND than it is to find the same data for a soldier in the American Revolution or

the Civil War. While it is fairly easy for us to verify the locations and activities of units—we maintain a massive order-of-battle list—it's much, much harder to discern the names and actions of individual soldiers in the unit.

**How is CMH adjusting to the new digital world of military history?**

Because the massive volumes of information now exist only in the cyber

are between 52 and 64. Some of the museums—such as West Point and Fort DeRussy in Hawaii—are major tourist attractions, but the principle reason for their existence is to educate soldiers about the Army's history and heritage.

**The idea of a National Museum of the U.S. Army has been around for a long time. What is its status?**

The project has recently been reinvigorated. A location has been chosen at Fort Belvoir, Va., and a design has been approved. It's important to remember however, that the museum is a public-private partnership. This means the government is providing all the artifacts and consults on the museum's design, but the Army Historical Foundation [[www.army-history.org](http://www.army-history.org)], a private organization, is doing the lion's share of the fundraising. While we're planning on a 2017 or 2018 opening, it is entirely possible that some of today's finan-

cial constraints, including sequestration, could adversely affect progress toward that goal.

**How is CMH's future shaping up?**

When I came into this job three years ago, I had three major goals: to move CMH into the digital age; enhance our combat collection efforts; and maintain our high standards in history, while bringing our museum standards up to the world-class level. We're doing those things. We have excellent people and a strong program, and enough diversity to cover the entire Army, while telling the smaller stories. There will be challenges, of course, but in general I would say the future looks very bright. **MH**



STAFF SGT. BERNARDO FULLER/U.S. ARMY

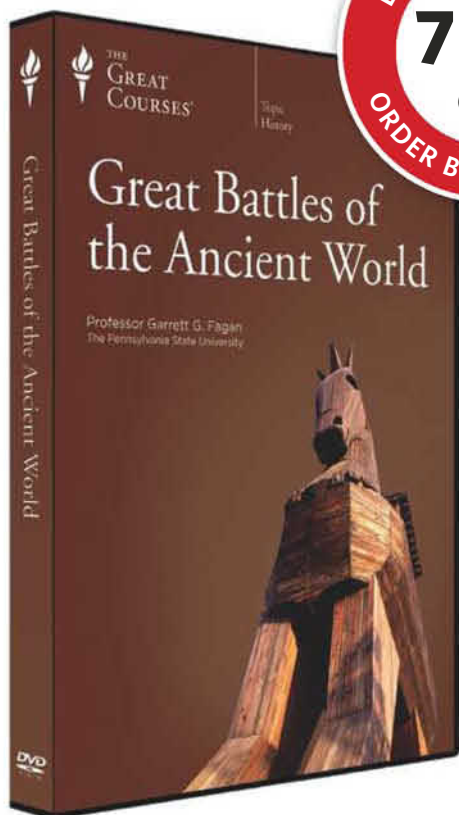
**The former director of the Army's Heritage and Education Center, Dalessandro (far right) has been head of CMH since February 2011.**

world, the most important thing we can do for scholars, who will eventually write the comprehensive histories of our recent conflicts, is to lay the foundation for a federated network that will combine the digital holdings of a variety of institutions, allowing researchers to comb the entire system with one keystroke.

**You mentioned Army museums—how many are there?**

Since we classify different types of collections by different names, there





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## Li-Wo's Last Fight

By Robert Guttman



IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUMS, A 31245; BOTTOM: ISTOCKPHOTO/THINKSTOCK

**Thomas Wilkinson**  
**Royal Navy Reserve**  
**Victoria Cross**  
**Java Sea**  
**February 14, 1942**

**H**is Majesty's Ship *Li-Wo* wasn't much of a warship. Barely 160 feet long, with steam engines generating less than 300 horsepower, it was built to carry passengers on the upper Yangtze River. In 1940, however, Britain was at war, and with proper warships needed in more militarily active regions, the Royal Navy commandeered *Li-Wo*, bolted an old 4-inch gun to its foredeck, installed a couple of Lewis machine guns and commissioned it as a patrol vessel. It was then dispatched to Singapore, considered a rear area of the conflict.

All that changed after the Japanese invaded Malaya on Dec. 8, 1941. By Feb. 13, 1942, Malaya had fallen and Singapore was about to follow. The British had already withdrawn their major warships in the region to Ceylon or

Java. Among the last to leave Singapore was *Li-Wo*, with orders to proceed to Batavia, on the island of Java in the Dutch East Indies (present-day Jakarta, Indonesia).

*Li-Wo's* 84 crewmen were as unlikely as their ship. On the day of departure its crew included 19 Royal Navy men, five soldiers, two Royal Air Force men, 10 Malays, six Chinese and 34 assorted Europeans. In command was 43-year-old Thomas Wilkinson, who had been *Li-Wo's* master when it had been a merchant vessel. Since he knew the ship, and since regular navy officers were required elsewhere, Wilkinson had remained in charge with the rank of temporary lieutenant in the Royal Navy Reserve.

Over the next 24 hours *Li-Wo's* crew repelled four air attacks, one of which reportedly involved 52 enemy aircraft. The vessel's gunners expended most of their ammunition, but the ship, though damaged, remained seaworthy.

On the afternoon of February 14 *Li-Wo* was passing north of the Bangka Strait when smoke appeared on the horizon. It came from a Japanese convoy en route to invade Sumatra, escorted by the 5,660-ton light cruiser *Yura* and two 2,000-ton destroyers, *Fubuki* and *Asagiri*.

Under the circumstances Wilkinson had only two rational options: surrender or make a run for it. Instead, he addressed his crew: "A Jap convoy is ahead. I am going to attack it. We will take as many of those Jap bastards as possible with us." He then asked the gunners how much ammunition was left. They reported a total of six semi-armor pierc-


ing shells, four graze-fuze shells, three anti-aircraft shells and three practice rounds. That and the Lewis guns was it.

What followed was perhaps the most one-sided sea battle since 1591, when Sir Richard Grenville, in *HMS Revenge*, single-handedly attacked an armada of more than 50 Spanish ships. *HMS Li-Wo*, its battle ensign flying and its single puny deck gun blazing, made straight for the nearest transport. The Japanese didn't return fire immediately, and *Li-Wo's* gun crew, survivors of the capital ships *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*, sunk two months earlier, made every shot count. Incredibly, the Japanese transport caught fire, and its men abandoned ship. After expending its ammunition, *Li-Wo* rammed the transport. Only then, under heavy enemy fire and with both ships locked together and sinking, did Wilkinson give the order to abandon ship. He remained at his station on the bridge and went down with *Li-Wo*. The battle had lasted almost an hour.

The enraged Japanese machine-gunned *Li-Wo's* survivors in the water, and one ship reportedly ran through the wreckage at high speed. Only seven men survived to be taken prisoner, and few of them lived through the next three years in Japanese prison camps. Not until the end of the war, when they were repatriated, did the story finally come to light. In 1946 the British government officially recognized the crew's valor. *HMS Li-Wo* became the most highly decorated small ship in British naval history. Heading the list of honorees was Temporary Lieutenant Thomas Wilkinson of the Royal Naval Reserve, awarded



**Wilkinson's Victoria Cross headed a long list of decorations awarded to *Li-Wo's* valiant crewmen.**

ed the Victoria Cross, as his citation reads, "in recognition of the heroism and self-sacrifice displayed not only by himself but by all who fought and died with him." 



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## Dropping the Bomb

By Edward G. Lengel



“[Truman] looked to the atomic bombs as a possible means of ending the war quickly.”

President Harry S. Truman's orders for atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on Aug. 6 and 9, 1945, were among the most important and controversial decisions of the 20th century. Critics have decried the immense loss of life in the strikes—70,000 to 80,000 people at Hiroshima and up to 75,000 at Nagasaki—to say nothing of the wounded and the thousands more who died of radiation poisoning in later years. Truman's supporters have pointed out that many more people—perhaps 1 million Japanese soldiers and civilians, and untold thousands more Allied troops—would have died had the bombs not been dropped. Regretting the thousands who died at Hiroshima and Nagasaki is fatuous, they suggest, without also considering the hundreds of thousands who lived because the invasion of Japan never took place.

Truman had much more to think about than the immediate human cost. He had to look to the long term. At stake were major geopolitical factors with global repercussions. And there was no clear choice between invading Japan or dropping the bombs and not invading Japan. In either case, he had no way of knowing whether Japan's leaders would surrender or continue to fight. He might have to drop the bombs *and* order an invasion. Underlying all was the consideration of time. Could the United States and the world face the repercussions of another year of war?

Invading Japan was the obvious, but not the only, alternative to employing atomic weaponry. Some historians have pointed out that the destruction of Japan's merchant fleet—reduced by a staggering 75 percent to less than 1.5 million tons of shipping by 1945—left the main islands vulnerable to a campaign of slow strangulation that would have made an invasion unnecessary. Yet the always resilient Japanese might well have endured a full blockade for years. The resulting malnutrition and disease inevitably would have had the greatest impact on the most vulnerable members of society—especially children—and left Japan a wasteland.

Negotiation was never a serious option. Tentative Japanese attempts to “reach out” to the United States through intermediaries seemed, and probably were, stalling tactics. Truman might

have followed up the July 26 Potsdam Declaration, calling for Japan's unconditional surrender, by openly disclosing the existence of atomic weaponry, which had only been successfully tested 10 days before. Most likely, however, the Japanese would have met any such disclosure with ridicule.

The impending intervention of the Soviet Union against Japan loomed large in Truman's mind. For the United States this constituted a painful example of “be careful what you wish for.” American diplomats had for years pressed Joseph Stalin to attack Japan's holdings on the Asian mainland. The Soviet leader ignored these pleas until the moment suited his ambitions. At the February 1945 Yalta Conference he finally agreed to attack the Japanese in Manchuria. In mid-July he set the date for mid-August (the invasion actually began on August 9). By then, however, with Okinawa secured and American forces just a step away from the Japanese home islands, intervention served only to expand Soviet influence in Asia.

No one regretted the Yalta decision more than Truman, but it was too late to pull back. Instead, he looked to the atomic bombs as a possible means of ending the war quickly and thus forestalling Soviet domination of the Asian mainland and perhaps even Japan. The repercussions of Soviet expansion for the peoples of Asia would be enormous, as the example of Eastern Europe already indicated in 1945, and the ongoing plight of the people of North Korea makes clear today.

There was more to Truman's decision, however, than a simple desire to overawe the Soviets and ensure continued Western influence in Asia. A protracted war accompanied by the intervention of Soviet land forces in Manchuria, Korea and China opened the prospect of direct military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union. In Europe, Adolf Hitler had done his inept best to promote discord among the Allies, and the Japanese could be expected to attempt the same. Any such U.S.-Soviet contest—a real possibility in the tense conditions of August 1945—might have caused World War II to metastasize into a much larger conflict accompanied by unparalleled suffering that would have dwarfed even the casualties resulting from a direct invasion of Japan.

Truman's anguish over whether to drop the bombs was real. The specter of Soviet intervention introduced an element of political calculation into his reasoning, but it also forced him to consider the potential for more human suffering should he fail to act. The circumstances of August 1945 forced the president into a cruel calculus in which he ultimately decided that dropping the bombs was the best way to save human lives. **MH**

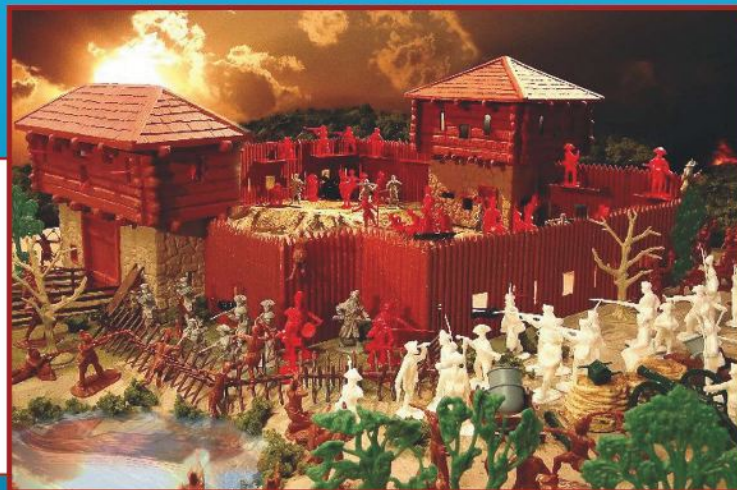


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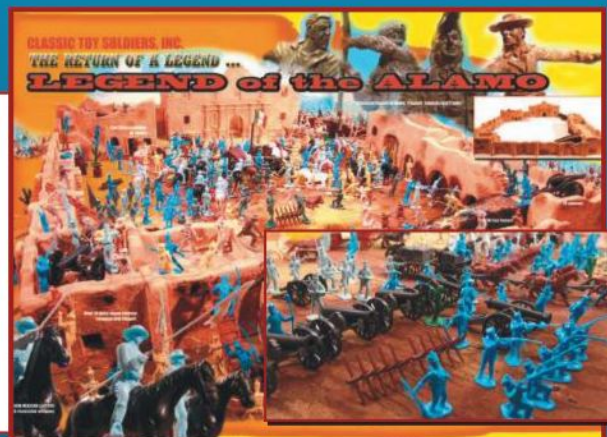
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# What We Learned...

## From Fort Eben-Emael, 1940

By Anthony Brandt

**A**ccording to one source it was Adolf Hitler himself who first floated the idea for an aerial assault on the lynchpin of Belgium's front-line defenses. "I have read something of your work with gliders," he told General Kurt Student, commander of Germany's

in 20 minutes the 78 men they carried had destroyed the fort's major gun emplacements and bottled up the defenders inside. The glider troops held on until reinforcements arrived, while other German units secured two of the bridges before the Belgians could



**German troops use a flamethrower to knock out an Eben-Emael strongpoint.**

first paratroop division. "I think some of your attack gliders could land on top of Fort Eben-Emael and your men could storm these works. Is that possible?"

Yes, it was. Commanding a strategic spot on the Albert Canal in eastern Belgium, the fort overlooked three bridges vital to the planned German invasion of France through the Low Countries. Eben-Emael bristled with artillery, was manned around the clock by rotating shifts of troops and was thought to be impregnable. While gliders had not yet been used in warfare, they seemed a good choice for a surprise assault on Eben-Emael—the motorless aircraft were silent and could actually land right atop the fortress.

Just after dawn on May 10, 1940, nine German gliders did just that. With-

destroy them. So much for the Maginot Line; the Germans had simply run around it. World War II was about to be taken to France.

The attack was a masterpiece of planning, training and execution. The fort was built in the early 1930s partly by German subcontractors, so the attackers knew the fort's internal design and layout. Training was intense and began in November 1939, six months in advance. The Germans constructed a model fort so soldiers would know the layout intimately when they landed. Since no force anywhere had ever used gliders in combat, secrecy shrouded their construction and dispersal as well; they were disassembled and shipped to their destinations in furniture vans. Pilots were recruited from nonmilitary

types who pursued gliding as a sport; they were by far the most qualified.

Another key element in the Germans' success was the use of shaped charges to penetrate the fort's thick concrete gun emplacements. The Belgians had no system for defending the fort internally; all personnel on-site were artillerymen, and all the guns pointed outward. Of the 78 troops who landed on the fort, only six were killed and 12 wounded. It was an amazing feat, one of the great raids of the war.

It was the Allies, however, not the Germans, who learned the most from the operation. The only other major glider attack launched by the Germans was on Crete, and glider losses were very high. But later Allied attacks by glider, based on the lessons of Eben-Emael—intensive training and mission rehearsal, surprise and speed—were largely successful. By late 1944 the United States had more than 10,000 assault gliders; they were used on D-Day in Normandy, in Operation Dragoon during the invasion of southern France and to cross the Rhine in Operation Varsity.

Though helicopters eventually replaced gliders, the German victory at Eben-Emael was a brilliant demonstration of how militarily effective the motorless aircraft could be.

### Lessons:

- No fortress is impregnable—not even the Death Star.
- The element of surprise can enable even a tiny force to beat a large one.
- Envelopment from above can be more effective than the traditional flanking movement.
- How do you get to Fort Eben-Emael? Practice, practice, practice.
- Don't let a potential future enemy build your defenses.
- Plan to defend against any eventuality, including those difficult to imagine.
- Even a corporal turned madman can have a brilliant idea. **MH**



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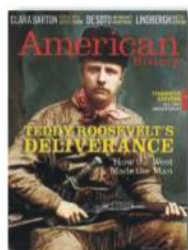
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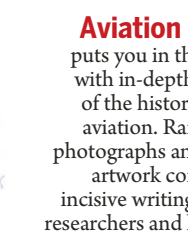
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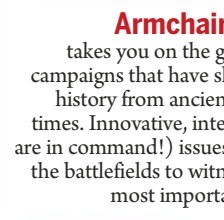
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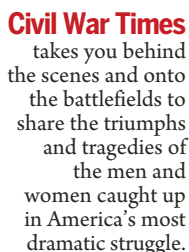
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## Victory's Vagaries

**S**ome successes in battle are clear-cut, unambiguous and easily won—a bold cavalry charge that swiftly overwhelms an apparently impregnable enemy position, for example, or a relentless aerial assault that leaves a desert highway littered with the burned-out vehicles of a retreating invader.


Yet history shows it is vastly more difficult to determine what constitutes ultimate, final “victory” in war.

There have always been ways to mark an adversary’s military capitulation, of course. In earlier times it was often the public removal of a defeated sovereign’s head, the pillaging of his capital city and the enslavement of his people. Over the centuries such barbarous conduct generally gave way to tamer but more elaborate ceremonies in grand halls or on the decks of mighty warships. And, of course, there have always been the parades: phalanxes of flag-bearing troops striding down wide boulevards to the cheers—and sometimes tears—of massed onlookers.

But victory is often as hard on the winner as it is the loser, and it is frequently not as final as either the victor or the vanquished might first assume.

Consider World War I. History’s first global mechanized conflict killed millions, laid waste to wide swaths of Europe, fueled revolution in Russia and helped spawn a worldwide economic crash. Gathered at Versailles, the victors demanded reparations that guaranteed the resurgence of German militarism. Moreover, their arbitrary division of the former Ottoman empire—based largely on lines of latitude and longitude on maps rather than on ethnic, religious or political realities on the ground—helped create many of the seemingly intractable regional conflicts with which the world continues to deal.

In World War II the Allies fought to defeat European fascism and Japanese imperialism. Attaining that goal cost dearly in blood, treasure and, in the cases of France and Britain, the loss of colonial empires. Victory had hardly been achieved, moreover, when a new war began—a cold one, perhaps, but one that brought the world to the edge of nuclear Armageddon more than once.

While that threat has apparently eased, the proliferation of well-armed, well-funded and zealously fundamentalist transnational terrorist groups has added a new dimension to any discussion of the meaning of victory. Avoiding even the minimalist conventional warfare tactics of traditional guerrillas, today’s terrorists studiously avoid direct combat and rely instead on teenage suicide bombers and brutal attacks on soft civilian targets. In this new war against shadowy, amorphous and hydra-headed groups the real question may be, *Is victory even possible?* 









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# THE COST OF VICTORY

IT'S A TRUISM AS OLD AS WARFARE ITSELF  
—SPECTACULAR VICTORIES OFTEN  
COME AT A TERRIBLE COST

BY ROBERT M. CITINO

Once upon a time there was a weekly network television program called *Wide World of Sports*. If you grew up in the 1960s or '70s, you'll remember the opening sequence: dramatic video clips of various athletes winning or losing. The voice-over was equally unforgettable, heralding "the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat," the latter underscored by a horrific ski-jump crash involving Yugoslavia's Vinko Bogataj. Indeed, in sports it is usually easy to determine who won and lost. The signifiers are there for all to see: the scoreboard, the

**U.S. troops who took part in the successful coalition effort to oust Iraqi forces from Kuwait parade through New York City in June 1991. As often happens, the outcome was not as clear-cut as it first seemed.**

trophies, the crumpled bodies of failed competitors like Bogataj. That clear-cut sense of victory and defeat is one of the very things we love about sports.



On the surface, judging a war's outcome should be just as easy. One side succeeds, the other fails. The signifiers are equally clear: Victorious armies parade through the loser's capital, enemy prisoners march through the winner's; a peace treaty, usually drawn up by the winner, punishes the loser. The Romans put it best: *Vae victis* ("Woe to the vanquished"). You know you've lost because you're suffering, and you know you've won because you're flush with territory, reparations and newly acquired prestige.

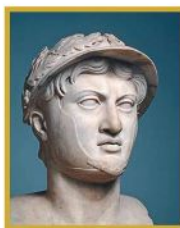
If only it were that simple. Even a cursory reading of military history tells us war is a messy and uncertain business. War is the realm of violence; it is unrestrained, indiscriminate and ugly, and analyzing it is like trying to analyze a tornado. An expert can make certain general comments, but predicting when, where and how it will end is near impossible.

Things can start so well—witness the German army's campaigns from 1939 to 1941 or the Japanese strike on Pearl Harbor. But initial superiority has a way of wearing down. Things equal out. Both sides make mistakes, and both tire. A few years in, those early wins can seem like ancient history. Just ask the Germans or the Japanese.

But even at the very end, the question, *Who won?* can be hard to answer. The victor may have crushed his adversary only to find that new dangers lurk in the postwar era. The winner may have exhausted himself in the course of the war, suffering such heavy losses that victory seems more bitter than sweet. Above all, the inexorable unfolding of future events may lead to a reassessment of the past, and wars that seemed obvious wins can easily slip into the loss column. If history teaches us anything, it is this: Anyone analyzing the outcome of a current war should probably be patient, wait a while and see how things play out in a decade or so.

**T**he factor that most commonly blurs military victory and defeat is the cost paid by the victors.

The concept is as old as warfare itself: Sometimes victory is too expensive. We usually credit a Greek king and general named Pyrrhus of Epirus with the original insight. Making war on the young Roman Republic, he won a smashing victory at the 279 BC Battle of Asculum, personally leading the cavalry charge that broke the Roman center and drove the enemy from the field with heavy losses. In breaking the Romans at Asculum, however, Pyrrhus nearly broke his own army. The Romans were tenacious even in defeat, and Pyrrhus' losses were grievous. Surveying the carnage after the fight, he muttered, "One more such victory, and we are lost." Ever since, a win so costly



**"One more such victory,  
and we are lost"**

that one wishes it hadn't happened has been known as a "Pyrrhic victory."

History is replete with examples. Historians still debate who "won" the Thirty Years' War, the great European religious conflict from 1618–48, but they agree the war devastated Central Europe, and the destruction lingers in the region's historical memory. Likewise, the British won the French and Indian War (1756–63), smashing French power in North America. Victory was so costly, however, that London had to raise taxes on its American colonists—and we all know how that turned out. Closer to our own day, Iraq spent eight years winning a war with Iran (1980–88) and emerged so hard-pressed for cash and resources that Saddam Hussein came up with the bright idea of invading Kuwait in 1990. That, too, ended badly. Indeed, since all wars are expensive, no victory is bloodless, and losses are almost always higher than anticipated, it is tempting to label them all Pyrrhic.

In seeking a classic example of a Pyrrhic victory, however, we need look no further than the outcome of World

War I. Most of the conflict featured trench warfare, with barbed wire and rapid-fire artillery, machine guns, poison gas and flamethrowers. The last year of the war saw tanks and aircraft come into their own. Wielding these industrial weapons were the tens of millions of soldiers conscripted by centralized bureaucracies, mobilizing more manpower than ever before. The war, conceived as a quick conflict of maneuver, turned instead into a grinding war of attrition with millions of casualties—the bloodiest war the world had yet seen. Even today it is difficult to visit a battlefield like Verdun, the Somme or Passchendaele and relate it to some airy political objective, almost impossible to get beyond the enormity of the slaughter that took place there.

No less an authority than Winston Churchill wrote the most telling verdict on World War I. In his history of the war, *The World Crisis*, he summarized the feeling of many of his compatriots. "Victory," he wrote, "was to be bought so dear as to be almost indistinguishable from defeat." Yes, the Allies won World War I, but it wasn't easy to say precisely what that meant, and indeed they had suffered a kind of defeat themselves.

**C**hurchill's next line in *The World Crisis* is also worth pondering: "[Victory] was not to give even security to the victors." Here he raises an intriguing possibility. Perhaps judging a war's outcome is the task not only of those who fought it, but also of future generations. Perhaps separating victory from defeat is as much a job for posterity as it is for the present.

We see this dynamic at work in our memories of World War I. The notion it had been an utterly futile and meaningless contest developed slowly over time. Certainly, there had been war weariness in all the combatant countries during the fighting, and morale was especially low in the countries being starved by the Allied blockade. By and large, however, civilian morale in Great



Italian dead fill a mountainside trench in 1915 during the First Battle of the Isonzo. The mechanization of war during the first decade of the 20th century made combat more lethal than it had ever been, thus magnifying the costs of victory.







WAR DEPARTMENT/NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Though the news proved premature, rumors of a German surrender brought jubilant crowds to New York's Times Square on Nov. 7, 1918 (above). While the armistice just days later sparked celebrations in the

United States, France and Britain, the Allied victory had been horrifically expensive in both lives and treasure—a cost that helped fuel the postwar depression (below) and led to political and economic turmoil worldwide.



NY DAILY NEWS ARCHIVE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Britain and France remained strong throughout. In other words, most folks at the time felt the war had been worth fighting and winning.

Not until a decade or so had passed did a belief the war had been senseless seem to take hold among broad segments of the European and American public, policy-makers and ordinary folk. Think of the great German wartime novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*, by Erich Maria Remarque, a book that more than any other summarizes the view of World War I as four long years of suffering. Then take note of its publication date: 1929. Compare it to Robert Graves' English-language masterpiece, *Good-bye to All That*, dealing with the same themes of wartime disillusionment and senseless killing. Its publication date? 1929. The next year, 1930, saw *All Quiet* turned into a popular movie that won the Academy Award for Outstanding Production (Best Picture).

The point is it often takes time to judge whether a war was worth fighting, whether it was worth the cost and thus whether it was a victory. By 1929 it had become clear to a generation of Europeans (and not a few Americans) that, despite how important it had seemed at the time, World War I was an experience best not repeated. Disillusion had set in. The peace established by the Treaty of Versailles wasn't much of a peace at all, and even the victorious powers had hit a rough patch. Economic troubles, hyperinflation and unemployment plagued societies seeking to demobilize from total war. Political extremists of every stripe, communists and fascists, anarchists and racists, dominated the discourse. It was an age of loudmouths, bad men with bad ideas, but with enough "passionate intensity" to recruit millions of followers. Joseph Stalin in the Soviet Union, Adolf Hitler in Germany and Benito Mussolini in Italy were the best known, but every country in Europe had a local version. Instability, political violence and assassination were the order of the day on the home front.

For all these reasons, it was understandable for a thinking person in 1929 to look back at the recent war and ask, "Was it worth it?" For most the answer was, "No." The question seemed more pressing to the nations that had won the war. The losers, especially in Germany, had a different motivation: They were already plotting revenge. Thus the Allied victory parades of 1919 gave way to an era of frantic rearmament in the 1930s as Great Britain and France struggled to catch up to Germany, and then to the outbreak of a new, much bloodier war in 1939. World War I—the greatest conflict in human history, and a signal Allied victory—shrank to the status of a mere curtain-raiser.



**"Victory was to be bought so dear as to be almost indistinguishable from defeat"**

Even wars that were quick and decisive wins—and relatively bloodless for the victor—can see their reputations diminish based on new postwar realities. Consider Operation Desert Storm of 1991. No American living at the time will ever forget the drama: the months-long buildup of U.S. and coalition troops in the theater, the public's dread of huge casualties, the network anchors openly discussing missiles and poison gas and body bags and warning gravely the Iraqi army was "the fourth largest in the world."

Then came the war itself. A month of aerial bombing opened the campaign, inflicting punishing casualties on front-line Iraqi forces and vaporizing Saddam's lines of supply and communication. Lasers guided smart bombs to their targets, while dumb ones rained down like hail. Iraqi units in Kuwait took a pounding. The land campaign was more of the same, combining the brute force of armored and mechanized divisions with a great deal of operational finesse. Coalition forces bypassed the toughest of the Iraqi fortifications on the Saddam Line and blasted forward in style.

The coalition's most serious operational problem was how to process the thousands of Iraqi soldiers wanting nothing more than to surrender as rapidly as possible.

It was all over in 100 hours—the combination of M1 Abrams tanks, highly trained crews and laser rangefinders proved impossible for the Iraqis to stop. Not even nightfall, usually a time when an army at a disadvantage can breathe and recover, made much difference. Virtually every U.S. tank, fighting vehicle and Apache helicopter possessed a thermal weapon sight that picked up heat differentials, letting U.S. crews see as clearly at night as in daylight and allowing the destruction to continue. The

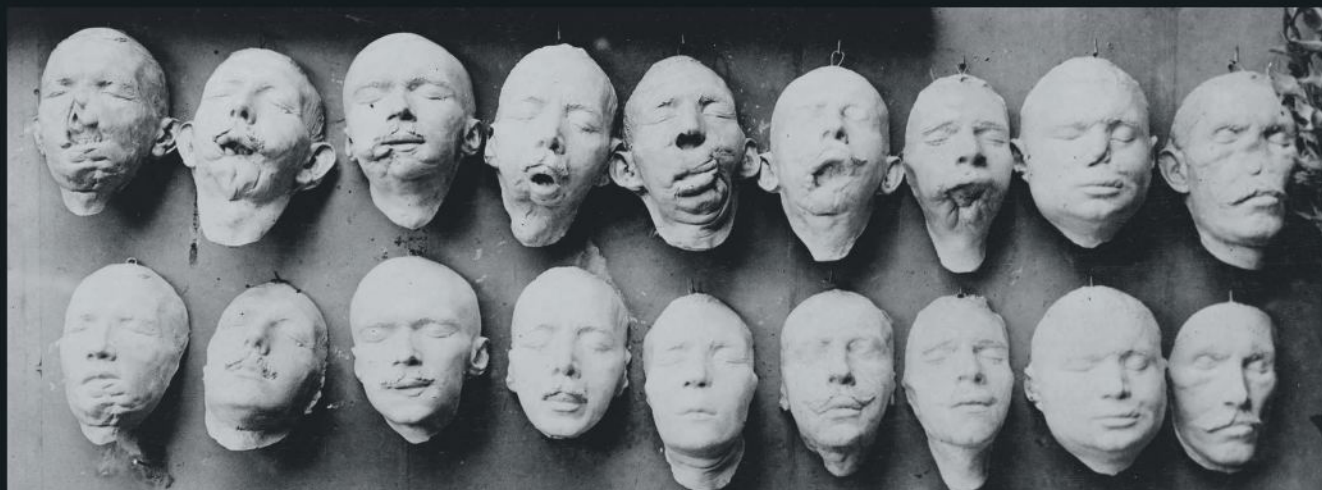
numbers still boggle the mind. In four days coalition forces destroyed no fewer than 3,847 Iraqi tanks out of 4,280 deployed in the theater during combat.

This was victory as cheap and as decisive as it comes.

The coalition threw the Iraqis out of Kuwait, President George H.W. Bush called a quick cease-fire, and most Americans breathed a sigh of relief. Then they began to cheer, long and loudly. A victory parade in Washington, D.C., on June 9, 1991, saw 200,000 people turning out to see their heroes march, while fighter planes thundered overhead and M1 tanks and Patriot missile batteries rolled by. It was "a great day," Bush exulted. For a country whose last two big wars had ended in a less than satisfying stalemate (in Korea) and an outright defeat (in Vietnam), the taste of victory was sweet indeed, and Americans seemed determined to savor it. There was even a bit of lighthearted grumbling, with some wags suggesting the Desert Storm parades were lasting longer than the war itself.

Every party has a morning after, and perhaps a hangover was inevitable. Saddam remained in power, boasting he had defied the will of the United States. Military operations shifted into minor key mode but never really ended. No-fly zones remained in effect, protecting the Shiites in southern Iraq and the Kurds





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The human cost of World War I—illustrated by the masks created for facially maimed U.S. troops (above) and a prosthesis fitted to a German soldier who lost an arm (left)—did little to avert the even greater death and destruction wrought by World War II.



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AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION AND SALVAGE OF ARTISTIC AND HISTORIC MONUMENTS IN WAR AREAS/NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Victory can also come at the price of national cultural treasures, such as Britain's Coventry Cathedral, destroyed by bombing (top), or looted artworks that, though recovered (above), might suffer damage and may never make it back to their rightful owners.

in the north, and a shifting set of economic sanctions sought to limit the rebirth of Iraqi military power.

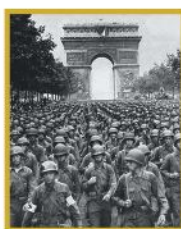
After the trauma of 9/11, a new U.S. administration under President George W. Bush launched yet another war with Iraq in 2003, not a defense of friendly states in the region as in 1991, but an invasion of Iraq proper. The celebrated victory over Saddam Hussein in 1991, therefore, had apparently led to little more than another war with the same opponent in 2003. Once again a rapid victory ensued—a few weeks of tough fighting on the road to Baghdad, the famous “thunder runs” into the city and a made-for-TV moment of joyous Iraqi crowds toppling a statue of Saddam. And again Americans got victory fever, a mood punctuated by a May 1, 2003, ceremony aboard the aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln*, featuring Bush speaking in front of a MISSION ACCOMPLISHED banner.

By the summer, however, this second victory had also proved illusory. Occupied Iraq erupted into an insurgency that seemed impervious to American attempts to crush it, inflicting heavy casualties on the occupying troops and wounding U.S. prestige abroad.

The point is not simply to rehash an unpleasant slice of recent history. Rather, it is to show how difficult it can be to assess victory, and how the idea of victory can change over time. Desert Storm, far from an end in itself, was only the beginning of a very troubled sequence of events. Back in 1991 many thought a new era in warfare had dawned, one of “full-spectrum dominance” and unassailable American power. Traditional U.S. assets like massive firepower and deep logistics now linked with some new ones: digital readouts, smart bombs and satellite intelligence. The new U.S. military could do it all. In World War II terms, it could maneuver like the Germans and pound you like the Soviets, mixing brain and brawn in equal measure. And it played well on television, from its shiny new equipment to its commander, General Norman Schwarzkopf,

an aggressively Pattonesque figure straight from central casting.

Twenty years on those days seem an exercise in nostalgia. America’s wars in Iraq and Afghanistan could not have been more different, less satisfying or less telegenic. Charging tank battalions gave way to small-arms skirmishes; wide-ranging desert maneuvers to the drudgery of street corner patrols. High technology seemed stymied. The breakout star in both conflicts was the low-tech and decidedly unglamorous IED (improvised explosive device, or roadside bomb). In U.S. military circles, discussion of high-tempo mechanized operations gave way to counterinsurgency (COIN) theory. COIN advocates



**‘Perhaps the essential attribute of a victory is that it must endure’**

are not very interested in traditional combat, which they mock as simplistic “kinetic” operations. Rather, they emphasize techniques to win the support of local populations in order to sap the strength of insurgents operating among them. COIN worked in Iraq—apparently. It hasn’t worked all that well in Afghanistan, and with the wind-down of both wars (or at least U.S. participation in them), the future is more uncertain now than at any time in recent memory. As a result, many historians today are likely to place a metaphorical asterisk next to the victory in Desert Storm, calling into question its operational or strategic significance. As for the public, they barely seem to remember it at all.

In the end, perhaps the essential attribute of a victory is that it must endure. Let us recall the United States fought another war in the 20th century. It was long and bloody. Only after serious early defeats did American forces right themselves, push back and finally roll on to victory in 1945. It required the concerted strength of the entire nation, however, as well as more than 400,000

American dead, and no one should ever minimize its cost. The aftermath, too, was troubled, with the rise of a new adversary more powerful than the old one had ever been.

Still, World War II has produced none of the anguish or existential hand-wringing that World War I did. Virtually all Americans still brag about defeating Hitler’s Germany and paying back Japan for Pearl Harbor. The men and women who fought the war still routinely receive praise as America’s “greatest generation,” perhaps a bit unfairly to all the other great generations this country has produced. The rise of the Soviet Union, the Cold War, the threat of thermonuclear annihilation—none of these things changed anyone’s mind.

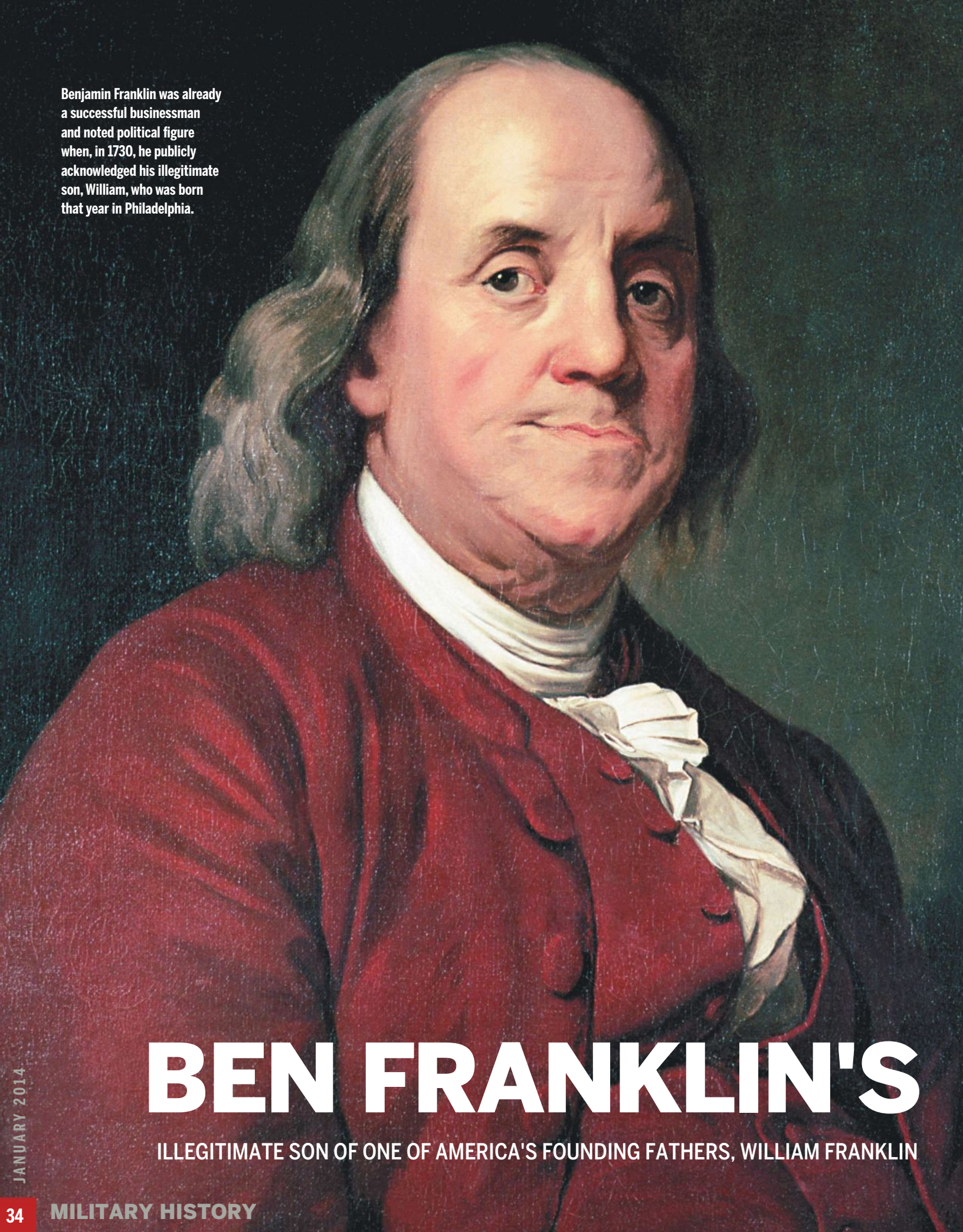
Americans still obsess over World War II, with reams of new books and related university courses filled to overflowing. Nearly 70 years after it ended, the

war remains a victory to Americans.

“The thrill of victory, and the agony of defeat.” Let us return to our ski (mis)jumper Vinko Bogataj. He suffered a mild concussion during his infamous run, but he survived and in fact became something of a minor celebrity in the West as a result of his five seconds of fame on television. Today, he is married, has two daughters and is living an apparently happy life with his family in Slovenia. Winner or loser? It seems as if time has told the tale. **MH**

*Robert M. Citino writes a regular column (“Fire for Effect”) for World War II magazine and is a visiting faculty member at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa. He is the author of nine books, including Blitzkrieg to Desert Storm: The Evolution of Operational Warfare (2004) and The Wehrmacht Retreats: Fighting a Lost War, 1943 (2012). For further reading Citino recommends Dance of the Furies: Europe and the Outbreak of World War I (2011), by Michael S. Neiberg; All Quiet on the Western Front (1929), by Erich Maria Remarque; and The Generals’ War (1995), by General Bernard E. Trainor.*



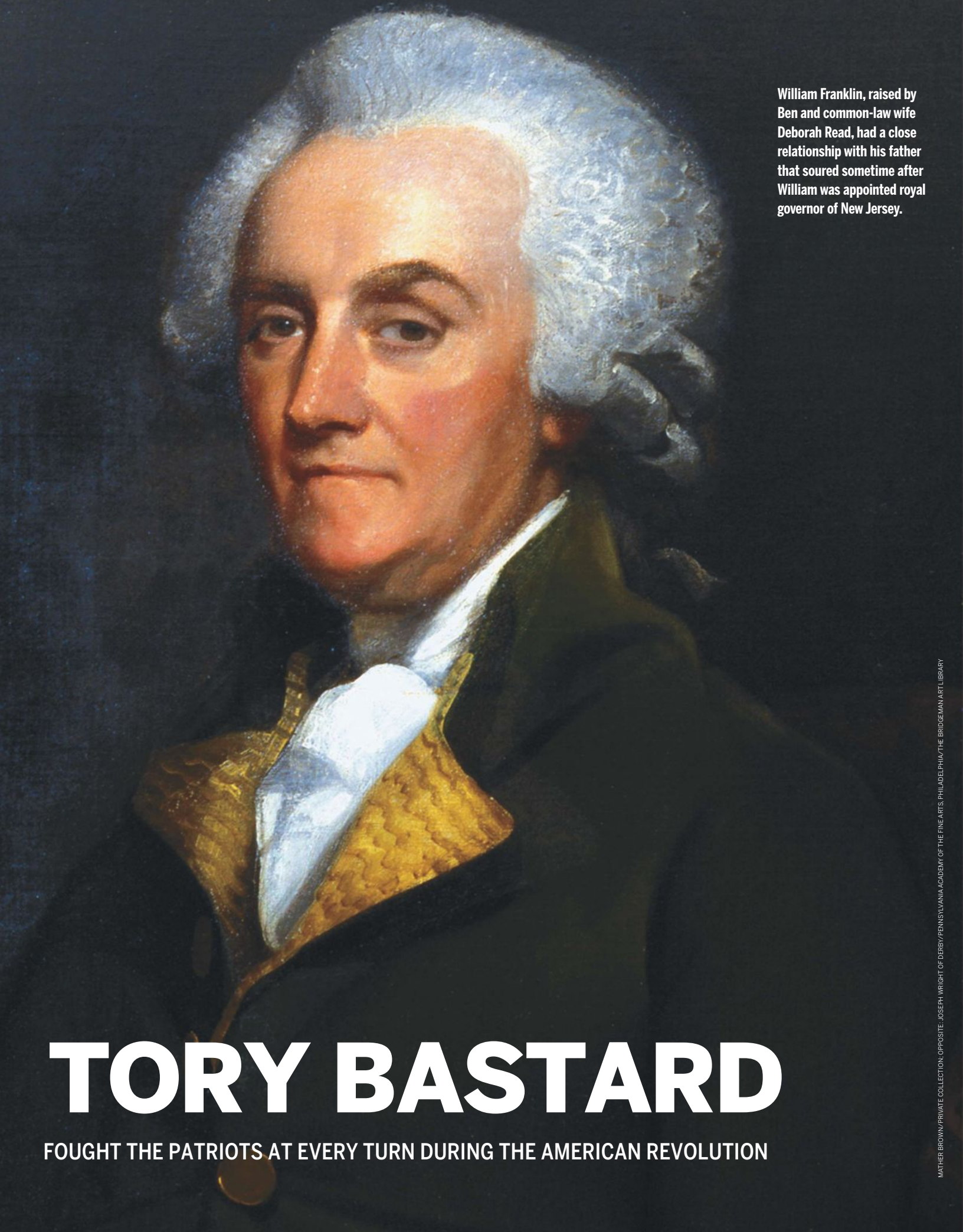
A detailed oil painting of Benjamin Franklin, showing him from the chest up. He has long, wavy, light-colored hair and is looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark red coat over a white cravat. The background is dark and textured.

Benjamin Franklin was already a successful businessman and noted political figure when, in 1730, he publicly acknowledged his illegitimate son, William, who was born that year in Philadelphia.

# BEN FRANKLIN'S

ILLEGITIMATE SON OF ONE OF AMERICA'S FOUNDING FATHERS, WILLIAM FRANKLIN



A detailed oil painting of William Franklin, a man with powdered white hair, wearing a dark green coat over a yellow waistcoat and a white cravat. He is looking slightly to the left with a serious expression. The background is dark and indistinct.

William Franklin, raised by Ben and common-law wife Deborah Read, had a close relationship with his father that soured sometime after William was appointed royal governor of New Jersey.

# TORY BASTARD

FOUGHT THE PATRIOTS AT EVERY TURN DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



**O**n April 12, 1782, a force of Loyalist irregulars took Joshua Huddy, a Patriot militiaman, from custody aboard a British warship, rowed him to a desolate New Jersey beach and lynched him. Pinned to his body was a note: “We the Reffugee’s [sic] having with Grief Long beheld the cruel Murders of our Brethren...have made use of Capt. Huddy as the first Object...to Hang Man for Man.”

The note ended, “Up Goes Huddy for Philip White”—a murderous equation conceived by William Franklin, renegade son of Benjamin Franklin.

Huddy belonged to the Association for Retaliation, a group of Patriot vigilantes who fought not British regulars but American Loyalists—labeled “Tories” by the Patriots. White was a self-proclaimed Loyalist Refugee in a paramilitary force led by Franklin. A ruthless guerrilla civil war—inspired more by vengeance than by ideology—was raging as the Revolutionary War neared its finish. On the very day Huddy was hanged by order of William Franklin, Ben Franklin was in Paris holding preliminary negotiations with a British official to end the war. The lynching of Huddy—a sad though relatively minor act—was to have international repercussions and threaten the peace talks.

**B**y April 1782, six months after the British surrender at Yorktown, there was little military action between American and British forces north of Virginia. But guerrilla raids and skirmishes still bloodied what combatants called the “neutral ground,” a swath of northeastern New Jersey that lay between the British army stronghold in New York City and the Continental Army in the Hudson Highlands. Neither force fought to take the neutral ground. The fighting was primarily between foes like Huddy and White.

Huddy had not killed White. White was a Tory prisoner slain weeks earlier under suspicious circumstances by his Patriot captors. But Huddy *had* boasted of lynching another Tory, and for Franklin that was enough of a crime for him to order Huddy hanged.

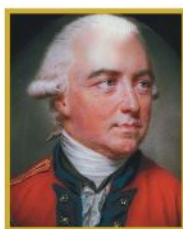
Joshua “Jack” Huddy had fought Tories on land and at sea. In August 1780 he was commissioned captain of *Black Snake*, a privateer gunboat that preyed on ships supplying the British troops in New York. A month later while he was ashore, the Black Brigade, a band of Tories led by a former slave known as Colonel Tye, trapped him in his home, torched it and captured him. Huddy escaped his captors that time. In 1782 he took command of the blockhouse at Toms River, a Patriot stronghold built to protect the local salt works.

On March 24, 1782, Tory raiders attacked the blockhouse. After seven defenders fell dead or mortally wounded, Huddy surrendered. The raiders then burned down the blockhouse, the salt works and the entire village. Their captors took Huddy and 16 other prisoners—four of them wounded—to British army prisons in New York.

William Franklin had negotiated an extraordinary agreement with General Sir Henry Clinton, commander of British forces in North America. Clinton gave the Board of Associated Loyalists—Franklin’s innocuously named guerrilla force—the right to hold prisoners rather than hand them over to the British.

Franklin ordered Huddy placed in the custody of Captain Richard Lippincott of a Tory regiment under Franklin’s control. Lippincott took Huddy from the prison to a British warship off Sandy Hook. A few days later Lippincott and a party of Associators, as Franklin’s guerrillas were called, returned to the warship and ordered a British naval officer to hand over Huddy. Franklin’s instructions to Lippincott were supposed to be secret, but the British officer later said he knew Lippincott was taking Huddy off to be hanged, for he saw a paper that contained the words “Up Goes Huddy.”

Lippincott and his men put Huddy in their boat and rowed to a bleak stretch of shore near Sandy Hook. The Tory captain walked his Patriot prisoner to a makeshift gallows, put a noose around his neck, pointed to a barrel under the gallows, gave him a piece of foolscap and advised him

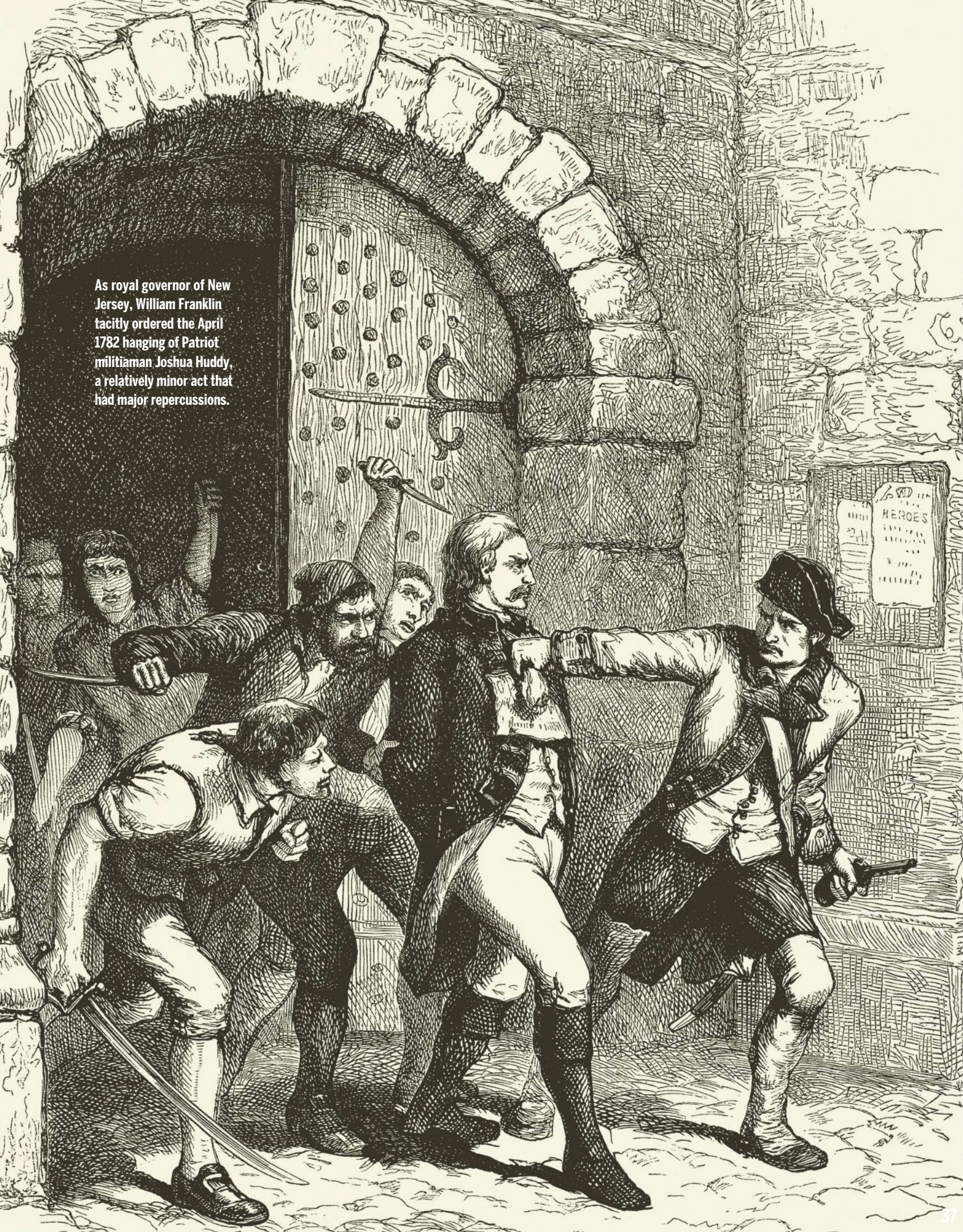


**General Sir Henry Clinton gave William Franklin’s Loyalist group the right to hold prisoners**

commissioned captain of *Black Snake*, a privateer gunboat that preyed on ships supplying the British troops in New York. A month later while he was ashore, the Black Brigade, a band of Tories led by a former slave known as Colonel Tye, trapped him in his home, torched it and captured him. Huddy escaped his captors that time. In 1782 he took command of the blockhouse at Toms River, a Patriot stronghold built to protect the local salt works.



As royal governor of New Jersey, William Franklin tacitly ordered the April 1782 hanging of Patriot militiaman Joshua Huddy, a relatively minor act that had major repercussions.

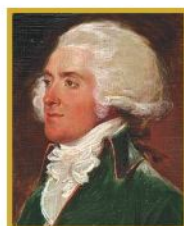




to write his will. Using the barrelhead as a desk, Huddy scrawled his will on the foolscap, adding a note on the back that read, “The will of Captain Joshua Huddy, made and executed the same day the Refugees murdered him, April 12th, 1782.” He then shook hands with Lippincott and climbed atop the barrel. A black Tory—likely an ex-slave given freedom for going over to the British—kicked the barrel from beneath Huddy’s feet. A few minutes later someone attached the “Up Goes Huddy” note, and Lippincott led his men away.

**W**illiam Franklin’s odyssey from pampered son to merciless Tory began in Philadelphia, Pa., where he was born in either 1730 or 1731 to an unidentified “Mother not in good Circumstances.” The acknowledged father was Benjamin Franklin. He and his common-law wife, Deborah Read Franklin, raised the boy, whom his father called Billy. The elder Franklin doted on his son, taking him on various overseas trips, supervising his education and arranging for him to become a teenage officer

in the Pennsylvania Militia. Ben said William grew so “fond of military Life” that his father wondered if he would ever return to civilian life. But he did, choosing the law and becoming, in the words of a friend of



**William put Temple, his own illegitimate son, in foster care in London. Grandfather Ben brought Temple to America in 1775**

his father, a young man of “good sense and Gentlemanly Behaviour.” He was present during his father’s famed kite experiment with electricity.

William accompanied Benjamin to London in 1757, aiding him in his work as a lobbyist for the Pennsylvania Assembly. Sometime around 1759 William fathered an illegitimate son, William Temple Franklin. The boy’s mother, like his grandmother, was never identified, but his middle name suggests he was conceived while his father was studying at London’s Middle Temple court of law. Temple, as Ben Franklin always called him, was placed in a foster home, his upkeep and education paid for by his grandfather.

William, handsome and charming, rose high enough in British society to join his father at the 1761 coronation of George III. A year later Ben Franklin sailed home, leaving behind his son and grandson. William was busy advancing his career and wooing wealthy heiress Elizabeth Downes. Four days after their September 1762 wedding, King George made a surprising announcement: He tapped William Franklin as royal governor of New Jersey. After a stormy winter passage across the Atlantic, William and Elizabeth arrived in Governor Franklin’s colony in February 1763.

**O**wing to land disputes dating back to the 1670s, by the time William Franklin assumed his new post, New Jersey was divided into two provinces: East Jersey, whose capital was Perth Amboy, a seaport across from



**When the tea tax uproar swept the colonies and inspired a boycott, William**

Staten Island; and West Jersey, whose capital was Burlington, near Philadelphia. The colonial legislature met in Perth Amboy, but the new governor chose to live in Burlington. For a time William, employing the social and political skills he learned from his father, managed to span the divide.

“All is Peace and Quietness, & likely to remain so,” Franklin reported in 1765 to William Legge, Lord Dartmouth, first lord of trade and later secretary of state for the American colonies. But his prediction did not come true. That same year the Sons of Liberty led numerous New Jersey protests against the Stamp Act. Franklin eased the crisis by ordering the hated stamps be kept aboard the ship delivering them from London, and he had the political wisdom to join in the celebration when the Stamp Act was repealed.

But when the tea tax uproar swept the colonies in 1770 and inspired a boycott, he showed his opposition by hold-





LEFT TO RIGHT: JOHN TRUMBULL/YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY, 1832-24; © FODDLES/ROCK/CORBIS; JOHN TRUMBULL/YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY, 1958-51

### Franklin opposed it, but he could not halt the growing revolutionary fervor.

ing tea gatherings in the governor's house. At one of the teas 9-year-old Susan Boudinot became famous for accepting a cup of tea, curtsying—and then emptying the cup out a window to show her support of the boycott. Her act symbolized the revolutionary fervor Franklin could neither escape nor ultimately control.

In 1774, when the First Continental Congress assembled in nearby Philadelphia, Franklin moved New Jersey's seat of government from Burlington to Perth Amboy. He took up residence in the palatial Proprietary House, named after the Board of Proprietors, rich and influential landowners who became his most important supporters. The move distanced William from Philadelphia's rumbles for independence, but Perth Amboy had its own homegrown rebels.

In January 1775 Franklin told Lord Dartmouth there were "no more than one or two among the Principal Officers of Government to whom I can now speak confidentially

on public Affairs." Three months later, after news of the Battles of Lexington and Concord reached New Jersey, he still clung to the hope that reason would prevail over revolution.

Then came the news that his father, accompanied by Temple, was in Philadelphia. The elder Franklin, who had returned to London in 1764 as a lobbyist, sailed home just in time to become the senior statesman of the American Revolution. As William entered Philadelphia to meet his father, he saw a city whose men were girding for war against the king. Rebel militiamen seemed to be everywhere, their "Uniforms and Regimentals as thick as Bees." And, he realized, he and his father were drifting into their own conflict.

Joseph Galloway, Ben Franklin's longtime Philadelphia friend, had just resigned from the Continental Congress after it rejected his proposal to create a colonial parliament but keep the colonies under royal rule. Ben was now as far apart from his friend as he was from his son. Yet Galloway, who had been William Franklin's first tutor in the study of law, believed he could bring father and son together. He arranged for them to meet at Trevoze Manor, Galloway's sumptuous home some 20 miles north of Philadelphia.

The meeting did little more than dramatize the rift between Benjamin and William, who by then was a royal governor without an official legislature. New Jersey law-making was in the hands of a rebel Provincial Congress. Happily, however, there was another reunion: William met Temple for the first time and invited him to New Jersey for the summer. Temple returned in the fall to his grandfather and schooling in Philadelphia.

Temple and his father began corresponding with each other. Soon, though, William Franklin's letter writing would abruptly cease.

Franklin's attorney general was Cortlandt Skinner, a member of one of the state's wealthiest families. Early in 1776, after learning the New Jersey Provincial Congress was about to order his arrest, Skinner fled to a Royal Navy warship in New York Harbor. Unlike other royal governors who made the same choice, Franklin remained defiantly in his governor's mansion.

When the Provincial Congress declared him "an enemy to the liberties of this country," Franklin protested using arguments both legal and vituperative. But the Continental Congress confirmed an order for his arrest and put Franklin in the custody of Connecticut Governor Jonathan Trumbull, who had sided with the Patriots. Franklin's first day of captivity happened to be America's first Fourth of July.

Franklin partisans claimed he was placed in a notorious underground prison in Simsbury, Conn., whose cells were carved into the shafts of a former copper mine. Many Tories were jailed there, including some personally sent by General



**After Congress confirmed William's arrest, Connecticut Governor John Trumbull held him under house arrest**



George Washington, but Franklin was not one of them. He was placed under house arrest and treated well.

Elizabeth Franklin remained at Proprietary House, a virtual prisoner, cut off from any correspondence with William. Her only comfort was Temple, allowed by Benjamin to spend the summer with his stepmother. In September, instead of returning to Philadelphia and school, Temple asked permission to visit his father in Connecticut. Benjamin refused the meeting, fearing William would turn Temple into a Tory. Around that time Congress called on the elder Franklin to negotiate an alliance with France, and when Ben sailed for Paris, he took his teenage grandson with him as his private secretary.

Meanwhile, William broke the rules of his parole, making clandestine contact with local Tories in Connecticut and others in New Jersey and New York. Congress punished him by confining him to a cell in Litchfield he later described as “a most noisome filthy Room.” There he received news his wife had fled to New York and died of what he later insisted was a broken heart. Plunged into depression and hoping his own life would soon end, Franklin was mercifully transferred to a private house. He remained there until October 1778, when he was exchanged for a ranking Patriot civilian captured during a battle a year before. Franklin headed straight for New York City and offered his services to General Clinton, who a few months before had assumed command of British forces in North America.

From the outset of the conflict New York, Britain’s Amer-



**British army Captain Charles Asgill barely escaped execution at the hands of revenge-minded Patriots**

ican citadel, had drawn thousands of Tories, who called themselves “Refugees” to advertise their woe-ful status. Disorganized and despairing, they became William Franklin’s new constituency. Within weeks of

his arrival in the city he had established the Refugee Club, which met in a tavern and plotted a new era for the embittered Loyalists.

The first public notice of Franklin’s organization came in a Dec. 30, 1780, newspaper article announcing the Associated Loyalists had been established “for embodying and employing such of his Majesty’s faithful subjects in North America, as may be willing to associate under their direction, for the purpose of annoying the sea-coasts of the revolted Provinces and distressing their trade, either in cooperation with his Majesty’s land and sea forces, or by making diversions in their favor, when they are carrying on operations in other parts.”

The 10-man board of directors, headed by Franklin and approved by Clinton, included Josiah Martin, the former royal governor of North Carolina, and George Leonard, a former Tory volunteer during the Battle of Lexington. In a short time more than 400 Loyalists became Associators. Franklin had regained his status as a Loyalist leader, though



**Continental Army troops arrive to arrest William Franklin, who had defiantly**

Clinton viewed him as a reckless agitator at a time when the war was winding down. Then came the outpouring of American outrage at the hanging of Huddy by a Franklin minion.

**E**ven the Presbyterian minister who preached at Huddy’s funeral demanded retribution. George Washington, who called the hanging an “instance of Barbarity,” wrote to Clinton, warning that a British prisoner would be executed if Clinton did not turn over Lippincott. Clinton stalled by ordering that Lippincott be court-martialed for murder. Washington responded by directing that a British officer of similar rank to Huddy be selected by lot from prisoners of war and sent to the Continental Army encampment in Chatham, N.J.

Thirteen captive British officers in Pennsylvania were selected to draw a piece of paper from a hat. Twelve papers were blank. Captain Charles Asgill of the 1st Regiment of





LEFT TO RIGHT: JOHN FIELDING/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; CULVER PICTURES/THE ART ARCHIVE AT ART RESOURCE; NEW YORK: JOHN TRUMBULL/YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY, 1960.13

remained in the governor's mansion. He ultimately fled to exile in England.

Foot Guards drew the paper with “unfortunate” written on it. He was the 20-year-old son of Sir Charles Asgill, a former lord mayor of London. Not only was Asgill from a prominent family and a famed regiment, but also, as a prisoner from the siege of Yorktown, he had a special protected status under an article of the surrender agreement.

Court-martial testimony from Lippincott and others revealed that Franklin had secretly ordered the hanging. In a scene sketched from the testimony, Lippincott appears before Franklin and members of the associated board before removing Huddy from the warship. Lippincott takes a paper from his pocket and shows it to Franklin, saying, “This is the paper we mean to take down with us.” Another official, peering over Franklin’s shoulder, interjects: “We have nothing to do with that paper. Captain Lippincott, keep your papers to yourself.” That paper, Lippincott testified, was “the very Label that was to be placed upon Huddy’s Breast.”

While the court-martial proceeded, General Sir Guy Carleton replaced Clinton as commander of British forces in North America, and Clinton sailed for home. Condemning “unauthorized acts of violence,” Carleton disbanded Franklin’s Board of Associated Loyalists, but he could do nothing about the court-martial.

Franklin was secretly readying to sail for London when the court announced its verdict: Lippincott, it concluded, convinced “it was his duty to obey the orders of the Board of Directors of Associated Loyalists,” had not committed murder. The court therefore acquitted him.

The verdict stunned Washington. He knew he had to make good on his threat of retaliation, which, he wrote, “has distressed me exceedingly.” Then came an unexpected reprieve for both Asgill and Washington. Asgill’s mother had written a pleading letter to Charles Gravier, the count of Vergennes and French foreign minister, asking him to intercede. Vergennes sent his own plea to Washington, along with the mother’s letter. Washington, touched by the display of maternal love and eager to please the French, submitted the appeal to Congress, which in turn compelled Washington to free Asgill.



**Benjamin Franklin disinherited his Tory son, leaving him only worthless property in Canada**

Due to the long time it took for letters to travel, Asgill was not released until November 1782. By then William Franklin had fled to exile in London, and in Paris a peace commission had negotiated a preliminary treaty. One of the commission members was Ben Franklin; Temple Franklin served as its secretary.

Benjamin Franklin wrote a codicil to his will, disinheriting William except for an ironic bequest: a worthless piece of land in Nova Scotia, the destination of several thousand Tories who left the United States after the revolution. By the time Ben left France in 1785, he was a great-grandfather. Temple had just recorded the birth of his son with a diary note: “B a B of a B,” leaving readers to assume he meant “born a bastard of a bastard.”

William Franklin spent the rest of his life vainly seeking a rich reward for his service as a militant Loyalist and died in London in 1813. Lippincott joined the Tory exodus to Canada and was awarded 3,000 acres of for his military service. He settled in York (now Toronto), received half-pay for 43 years and died in 1826 at the age of 81. A street in Toronto bears his name. **MH**

*Thomas B. Allen is the author of Tories: Fighting for the King in America’s First Civil War. For further reading he recommends William Franklin: Son of a Patriot, Servant of a King, by Sheila L. Skemp; A Great Improvisation: Franklin, France and the Birth of America, by Stacy Schiff; and the website <http://co.monmouth.nj.us/page.aspx?Id=1800>, which contains “documents created during, or immediately after, the life of Joshua Huddy.”*



By Richard A. Gabriel



# BLOODLANDS

## HISTORY'S REPEAT BATTLEGROUND

### ALEXANDRIA Tinderbox on the Mediterranean

In 331 BC Alexander the Great founded Alexandria on the site of an ancient Egyptian town that served as a Mediterranean fishing port and pirates' den. In 323 BC Ptolemy, one of Alexander's generals, took

over Egypt and founded a dynasty that lasted nearly three centuries. Alexandria was among the most important trading centers in the Mediterranean, strategically located to take advantage of both the

east-west and north-south Mediterranean maritime trade, much as Carthage had done earlier. Alexandria was Egypt's capital from ancient times until the Muslim conquest in 641.

## 2013

While Cairo was the scene of much of the civil and sectarian violence that flared across Egypt in the wake of a military coup against Islamist President Mohamed Morsi, Alexandria also saw widespread street fighting between pro- and anti-Morsi groups. Dozens of people were killed and hundreds injured during the clashes.

## 2010

The death of 28-year-old Khaled Mohamed Saeed while in police custody in Alexandria led to widespread antigovernment protests in the city and, later, in Cairo, helping fuel nationwide discontent with the 30-year authoritarian rule of President Hosni Mubarak. That discontent ultimately erupted into revolution in 2011, leading to Mubarak's fall from power.

## 1941

On the night of December 19 six Italian navy commandos, riding three manned torpedoes, attached limpet mines to British warships anchored in Alexandria's harbor. Though all six raiders were ultimately captured, their explosives severely damaged the battleships *Queen Elizabeth* and *Valiant* and two smaller vessels.

## 1882

In 1881 Egyptian army Colonel Ahmed Orabi initiated a coup against Tewfik Pasha, the khedive of Egypt. In May 1882 British and French warships arrived off the coast of Alexandria to protect their countries' interests. In June nationalists killed 50 Europeans during a riot in Alexandria. In response to the unrest, British warships bombarded Alexandria for two days. The rebels set fire to the city and caused great destruction.

## 1807

Seeking to secure a Mediterranean base of operations during the Anglo-Turkish War (1807–09), some 5,000 British troops landed outside Alexandria. After initial skirmishing, the city opened its gates to the invaders. British attempts to capture Rosetta in April led to a fierce battle that forced their withdrawal to Alexandria, which Arab and Mamluk troops then besieged. British forces surrendered and withdrew from the city on September 25.

## 1801

British sea power prevented the reinforcement of French forces in Egypt, and in March a British invasion force landed west of Alexandria. The battle for the city began on March 21 with a French attack on the British positions. Although outnumbered, the British were able to call upon fire support from gunboats anchored offshore. The French commander ordered a withdrawal to Alexandria, to which the British laid siege. Finally, on September 2, with food running out and the garrison suffering from an outbreak of scurvy, the French surrendered after receiving a promise of safe passage under arms. Ten thousand French soldiers boarded British ships for the voyage to France.







# 1798

Following his success in the War of the First Coalition (1792–97), Napoléon Bonaparte sailed to Egypt in May at the head of a 40,000-man invasion force. The French arrived on July 1 and, in one of history's few successful night amphibious landings, put ashore close to Alexandria. The invasion force took the city by storm the next day.

# 1365

After the collapse of the Crusader kingdoms in the Levant, Cyprus was left as the last bastion of Christian influence in the eastern Mediterranean. In October 1365 King Peter I of Cyprus, seeking to recapture former Crusader lands, led an invasion force to attack Alexandria. After three days of slaughter and looting, the Crusaders returned to Cyprus laden with booty. The sultan of Cairo was outraged and ordered reprisals against Christian merchants in his realm.

# 1168

In 1167 Crusaders invaded Egypt, capturing Cairo and driving off a Muslim army under Asad ad-Din Shirkuh, Saladin's uncle. Saladin and Shirkuh retreated to Alexandria. Faced by a superior Crusader-Egyptian army, Shirkuh withdrew, leaving Saladin with a small garrison to defend the city. The Crusaders besieged Alexandria for months before withdrawing as part of a negotiated settlement. Saladin's performance in battle led the caliph to appoint him emir of Egypt in 1169.

# 914

Between the 10th and 12th centuries an area including present-day Algeria, Tunisia, Sicily, Egypt and Syria came under the rule of the Fatimid caliphate (909–1171). In 914 the Fatimids invaded Egypt and occupied Alexandria, but a large army under Abu'l Hassan Mu'nis soon drove them from the country. The Fatimids recaptured Alexandria in 919. But within two years, in both land and sea battles, Mu'nis again defeated the Fatimids and retook the city.

# 815

Ostensibly ruled by the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad, Egypt was under the practical control of local rival princes. In the 790s Andalusian refugees in Spain, targeted by sectarian riots, were expelled by the Umayyads. They fled to Tunisia. With the Abbasids occupied putting down revolts at home, in 815 the refugees captured and occupied Alexandria.

# 645

Byzantine Emperor Constans II sought to retake Alexandria by sending an invasion fleet to exploit a popular uprising against the Arab occupation. The Byzantines captured the city. But in spring 646 the Arabs sent a 15,000-man force under 'Amr ibn al-'As, which defeated the Byzantines in a battle outside the walls and ultimately retook Alexandria.

# 642

After overwhelming the Persians, Arab armies attacked the Byzantines in 634, soon capturing Syria, Palestine and Byzantine Mesopotamia. In 639 the Arabs struck Egypt and in 641 besieged Byzantine-occupied Alexandria, which fell in September 642.

# 629

Between 622 and 629 the Byzantines won a series of battles that eventually brought the Persian army to its knees. The peace of 628 restored to the Byzantines all the provinces captured by the Persians a decade earlier, including Egypt. A Roman army once again occupied Alexandria.

# 619

The Sassanid Persians invaded Egypt in 618 and headed for Alexandria, which a Byzantine traitor betrayed to the attacking army the next year. The Persians then extended their rule southward along the Nile, completing the occupation of Egypt in 621.

# 115

Jewish communities throughout Rome's Middle Eastern provinces broke into open rebellion. Lukua, leader of the revolt in bordering Cyrenaica, captured Alexandria and set it afire. Emperor Trajan sent reinforcements to recapture Egypt, an undertaking that took two years. Hadrian subsequently rebuilt the razed city of Alexandria.

# 30 BC

After defeating Marc Antony and Cleopatra's forces at Actium in September 31 BC, Octavian marched on Alexandria. Antony won the initial engagement on July 31, 30 BC, but the next month Octavian renewed his invasion, attacking the city from the east and west simultaneously and capturing it after Antony's suicide. Alexandria became the principal port from which Egyptian grain was shipped to Rome, and Octavian placed it and Egypt under the emperor's direct control.

# 48–47 BC

During the Great Roman Civil War (49–44 BC) Julius Caesar defeated Pompey the Great at Pharsalus in August 48 BC. Pompey fled to Egypt, where he was assassinated. Caesar marched into Alexandria with a legion to mop up the remaining Pompeians, who convinced Egyptian co-rulers Ptolemy XII and Cleopatra to besiege Caesar at Alexandria. With most of his garrison Pompeians managed to slip out of the city and link up with a relief army at the Nile. He then turned around and defeated Ptolemy's army in February 47 BC, then seized Alexandria and claimed Egypt.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: EGYPT MEDAL 1882-1889; HERITAGE AUCTION GALLERIES, DALLAS; SWORD BELONGING TO A MIDSHPMAN WHO SERVED WITH NAPOLEON IN EGYPT. © NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, LONDON; THE IMAGE WORKS; 12TH CENTURY SCULPTURE OF A KNIGHT; BRICH LESING/ART RESOURCE, NEW YORK; COIN OF CONSTANTINE II; HERITAGE AUCTION GALLERIES, DALLAS; (3) ROMAN SPEARHEAD; MUSEO NAZIONALE DI VILLA GIULIA, ROME; THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY; PATCHOP/ THE DECIMA FLOTTIGLIA WAS; HERITAGE AUCTION GALLERIES, DALLAS





# AFGHANISTAN





# FIASCO

IN 1979 THE SOVIETS INTERVENED IN A BLOODY CIVIL WAR THEN RENDING AFGHANISTAN—THAT WAS THEIR FIRST MISTAKE BY ANTHONY BRANDT



Withdrawing from Afghanistan on May 21, 1988, Soviet armored units cross Friendship Bridge into Uzbekistan. When the last troops returned home in 1989, Soviet soldiers received a hero's welcome despite their failed attempt to stabilize the country.



**B**y April 1982 the Soviet Union had been fighting in Afghanistan for more than two years, and it was proving impossible to win, by any significant meaning of the word, the war against the *mujahedeen* who controlled much of the country outside the cities. Soviet units occupied towns and sometimes villages, but control in the most rural areas only lasted during the day. The night belonged to the *mujahedeen*. And one night that April, Ahmad Shah Massoud, perhaps the most brilliant of the numerous *mujahedeen* commanders, struck the massive, heavily defended Bagram Airfield complex north of Kabul with mortars and rocket fire, aided by saboteurs from within the supposedly pro-Soviet Afghan army. The *mujahedeen* destroyed planes and helicopters, damaged barracks and a hospital, and killed or wounded dozens of Soviet soldiers. The message was clear: You aren't safe anywhere.

The Russians struck back in May, seeking to clear out Massoud's stronghold in the Panjshir Valley, softening it up with bombing raids that lasted a week, then bringing in 12,000 troops—some by air, some by road—through the narrow pass that led into it. Massoud let in the vanguard and then dynamited the sides of the pass, setting off an avalanche that blocked the southern entrance and trapped the advance troops. He set up ambushes for other units moving into the valley. A second Soviet column advanced from the north, protected by helicopter gunships. But the *mujahedeen* were firing down from the mountains, and the gunships failed to dislodge them. For two weeks the Soviets managed to keep control of the valley floor, but fighting was constant and they knew they could not stay. When they withdrew they left behind dozens of ruined personnel carriers and flattened Afghan villages, taking with them the corpses of several hundred Soviet soldiers. War is generally about winning and occupying territory. The Soviets were learning the basic lesson of Afghanistan: You might win territory, but you can't keep it.

**C**onquerors have been learning that lesson about Afghanistan for centuries. The British conquered it in 1839, but lost an entire army in 1842 when, frustrated by their failure to pacify the countryside, they left their stronghold in Kabul and headed out to Jalalabad through the Khord-Kabul gorge, another narrow pass. They left with 4,500 troops and 12,000 civilian followers. One badly wounded British officer and a few Indian soldiers sur-

vived an ambush that ran the length of the seven-mile gorge. All the rest were killed or taken prisoner.

Afghanistan is a literal and figurative minefield, an extremely difficult place for invaders to find safe ground. The literal minefields survive from the Soviet intervention, and they still kill people. The figurative minefield is the Afghan people themselves, with their age-old hatred of intruders and their fierce independence. Nearly 80 percent of the population is rural; 70 percent is illiterate. All are armed, but except for those weapons, the country is technologically backward.

One of the poorest nations in the world, Afghanistan is traditionally conservative and deeply religious. The people belong to families, clans and tribes, in descending order, and only nominally to Afghanistan the country. A national consciousness scarcely exists. The Pashtun comprise 40 percent of the country's population, with Tajiks, Hazaras, Uzbeks and a few additional minor tribes making up the balance. Disputes among tribes, clans and families are settled violently—blood feuds are common, even within families. Warlords abound. Even among the *mujahedeen*, who fought the Russians, feuding, quarrels over strategy, struggles for power and actual fighting were not uncommon. Civil war is a way of life for Afghans.

In short, Afghanistan is relatively easy to conquer but impossible to subdue. Invaders will always face pockets of resistance, and the rebels will own the high ground, which is most of the country. In the end the Afghans will harass, ambush and raid interlopers to death.



Afghans have long regarded warfare as just another part of life. Seasoned *mujahedeen*, above, wait out a 1981 Soviet bombardment.

© STEVE MCCURRY/MAGNUM PHOTOS

© MARK RICHARDS/ZUMA/CORBIS; BOTTOM: ANG IMAGES/ULLSTEIN BILD





Among the Afghans' strengths were their ability to capitalize on U.S.-supplied or captured weapons—like the shoulder-mounted rocket-propelled grenade launcher held by a *mujahideen* rebel, above—and their familiarity with the mountainous terrain, which proved challenging for Soviets landing a Mil Mi-8 helicopter, below.







An October 1986 roadside battle rages during the Soviet “intervention.” The war brought back memories of 1929, when the Russians, though wielding even greater political influence in Afghanistan, also failed to quell civil unrest and bring its populace under control.

AKG IMAGES/RIA NOVOSTI

It was civil war in Afghanistan that prompted the 1979 Soviet intervention—a more accurate word than “invasion.” The Soviets did not want Afghan territory. Like the Americans in Vietnam, they were not looking to stay in Afghanistan indefinitely, only to stabilize the nation and bring the countryside, which was in revolt, under control.

The Soviets and Afghans were in fact old friends. In 1921 the Afghans were among the first to sign a treaty of friendship with Russia’s new rulers, followed by a nonaggression pact in 1926. The pact was followed in turn by financial aid, a telegraph line to Kabul, an air route and, tellingly, an earlier, unsuccessful intervention in 1929.

The Russians’ aim then was to restore their own Afghan favorite, Amanullah Khan, to his throne after one of Afghanistan’s frequent coups. “Between 1842 and 1995,” notes Sir Rodric Braithwaite, a onetime British ambassador to the Soviet Union and an expert on Afghanistan, “seven of them [Afghan rulers] fell victim at an accelerating pace to family feud, palace coup, mob violence or outside intervention. Between 1878 and 2001 four more were forced into exile.” Despite their failure in 1929, the Russians managed to restore their influence in the country. By the early 1970s a small communist party, the People’s Democratic

Party of Afghanistan, was active in the country’s politics. When another coup occurred in 1973, the PDPA was one of its supporters, along with some communist military officers. The PDPA was itself, to be sure, riven with factions, its members constantly plotting against each other.

Following the 1973 coup the new ruler, Mohammed Daud Khan, did everything he could to consolidate his control of the government. He abolished the monarchy, rewrote the constitution—thereby transforming Afghanistan into a one-party state where power rested almost entirely in his hands—spied on his enemies, murdered them when necessary and began to play the two great powers, the United States and the Soviet Union, against each other. The Americans hoped for military bases close to the underbelly of the Soviet Union, while the Soviets wanted to keep Afghanistan out of the Western sphere of influence. But no more than that: The Soviet Union was not angling to turn Afghanistan into another member of the USSR. It wanted to protect its border, nothing more.

It was only a matter of time before Daud became the next victim of the country’s violent politics. In April 1978 the coup came from the PDPA. Daud knew something was brewing and tried to round up the likely leaders, but one of them, Hafizullah Amin, set the operation in mo-



The Soviets decided to intervene in December 1979, but only with great reluctance



tion before he was put under house arrest. Military units committed to the PDPA attacked the presidential palace and, in the ensuing firefight, killed Daud and most of his family members. To the surprise of the Soviet Union, the Afghan communists now had the government in their own hands.

**T**he Soviets' first mistake was to think that the PDPA's takeover actually meant something, that it could bring reform and modernize Afghanistan. The PDPA tried to do so in traditional Afghan fashion—violently. Its reform program focused on literacy, equality for women and the end of age-old relationships in the countryside that put landowners, mullahs and elders at the top and peasants at the bottom. The PDPA's leaders naively expected the mosques to empty as their reforms took hold.

The “reform” program displayed an extraordinary ignorance of the Afghan people and the strength of the nation's traditional society. To make matters worse, the PDPA's leaders remained divided among themselves, and it was not long before they were conspiring against each other. Meanwhile, in the countryside, revolts against the program began almost at once. That's when the torture and executions began, too. Former opponents, former government ministers, Islamists, a whole clan in opposition—all were eliminated. Land reform was a big element in the PDPA program; to accomplish it, the regime simply took land from landlords and distributed it to the peasants. If the landlords objected, they were killed.

Since none of this fared well among Afghans no matter what their tribal loyalties, the revolts continued, and the government progressively lost control of the countryside. Army troops began deserting to the rebels in significant numbers. Afghan leaders started asking for help from the Soviet Union, not only in the form of weapons but also of troops. Amin, meanwhile, was grabbing more power within the government, taking on more and more offices, trying to ease out the actual president, Nur Muhammad Taraki.

Soviet leaders, who had both military advisors and KGB agents throughout Afghanistan, watched all this with growing alarm. Those in the Kremlin hierarchy were well aware Afghanistan presented an entirely different kind of problem than Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968. Afghanistan did not fit the Marxist pattern—it had no industry, so there was no proletariat for which to fight. They also recognized the ferocity of the Afghan people and their religious fervor as formidable opponents. Indeed, the great Soviet expert on Afghanistan, Lt. Gen. Andrei Snegarev, had warned in 1921 that because of the

country's topography and the nature of its people, an invading force would find it impossible to control.

Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov and the other old men at the top of the Soviet Union knew they could not take Afghanistan and modernize it by force overnight, and they had no wish to send troops into its maze of mountains. Intervention would trigger opposition, demonstrations within the USSR and global condemnation. The Soviets repeatedly urged the Afghan leaders to stop their infighting, stop brutalizing the country and stop trying to erase the traditional culture and turn Afghanistan into their idea of a communist paradise.

On Oct. 8, 1979, having already grabbed most of the government's power for himself, Amin had Taraki killed. Three men came for the president in his ornate palace, bound him and smothered him

with a cushion. Taraki had been the Soviets' man in Afghanistan, the leader Moscow trusted the most, and his murder only made a bad situation worse. One historian estimates that in the year and a half between the coup in April 1978 and Taraki's murder, 27,000 people were killed in Kabul's Pul-e-Charkhi prison alone. Other estimates put the killings nationwide at 50,000 or more. Hafizullah Amin kept a portrait of Joseph Stalin on his desk, and in response to Soviet criticism of his brutality he would remark, “Comrade Stalin showed us how to build socialism in a backward country.”

The Soviets decided to intervene in December 1979, but only with great reluctance and after much debate. In truth the



**An Mi-8 combat helicopter threads the maze of rugged mountains in Afghanistan's interior to attack mujahedeen rebel positions.**



**The USSR ostensibly invaded Afghanistan to secure the border, but resistance prompted the Soviets to escalate combat operations.**

ANG IMAGES/JULIEN BILD

ANG IMAGES/RIA NOWOSTI



## SOVIET WAR IN AFGHANISTAN, 1979–89

Afghanistan was in revolt—again. In April 1978 the Soviet-backed People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a minority player in Afghan politics since its 1965 founding, initiated a military coup, seizing control of the government and instituting redistributive communist “reforms” that soon alienated many of Afghanistan's deeply independent tribes and clans. The PDPA clamped down violently on all opposition. As the revolt spread, the party leaders appealed to the Soviets for arms and more direct military intervention.

Yet, in a land riven by factions, even the PDPA was divided against itself. In 1979, after PDPA hardliner Hafizullah Amin had rival Nur Muhammad Taraki killed and the civil unrest deepened, the Soviets decided to intervene. Their ostensible goals were to quell the revolt, reinstall a Moscow-friendly regime, train the Afghan army and get out quick. What followed instead was a decade-long guerrilla war.

While Soviet forces held the technological advantage, the Afghan rebels had the ideological edge and knew the terrain. From their rugged stronghold in the Panjshir Valley the *mujahedeen* made lightning strikes against the invaders, then vanished into the mountains. With military backing from the United States and neighboring nations they wore down the Soviets, who finally withdrew in 1989, mission unaccomplished. The civil war resumed, and Afghanistan remains a patchwork of warring factions.



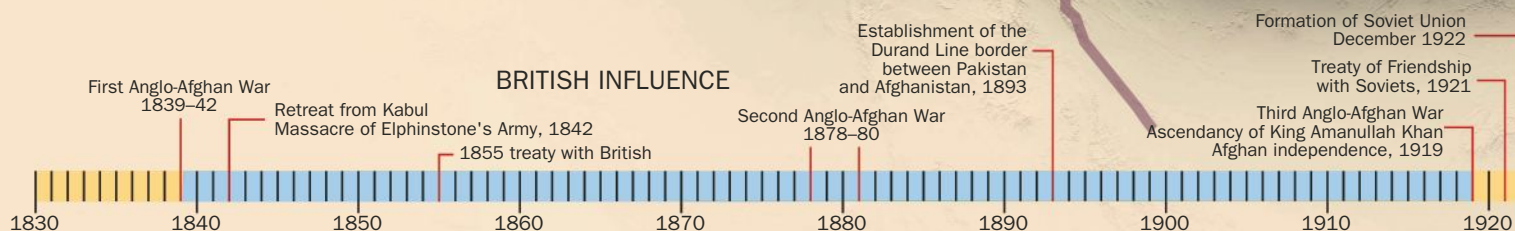
### WITHDRAWAL AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

From his 1985 appointment as Soviet general secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev sought both withdrawal from the military quagmire of Afghanistan and *perestroika*—reform of his own country's long-stagnant political and economic structure. He achieved the former by 1989 when the last Russian troops crossed from Afghanistan into Soviet Uzbekistan. His pursuit of the latter led by 1991 to the dissolution of the USSR and an end to the Cold War. As the old-guard communist leadership within Russia lost its influence, the outlying republics sought independence and today govern as autonomous states.

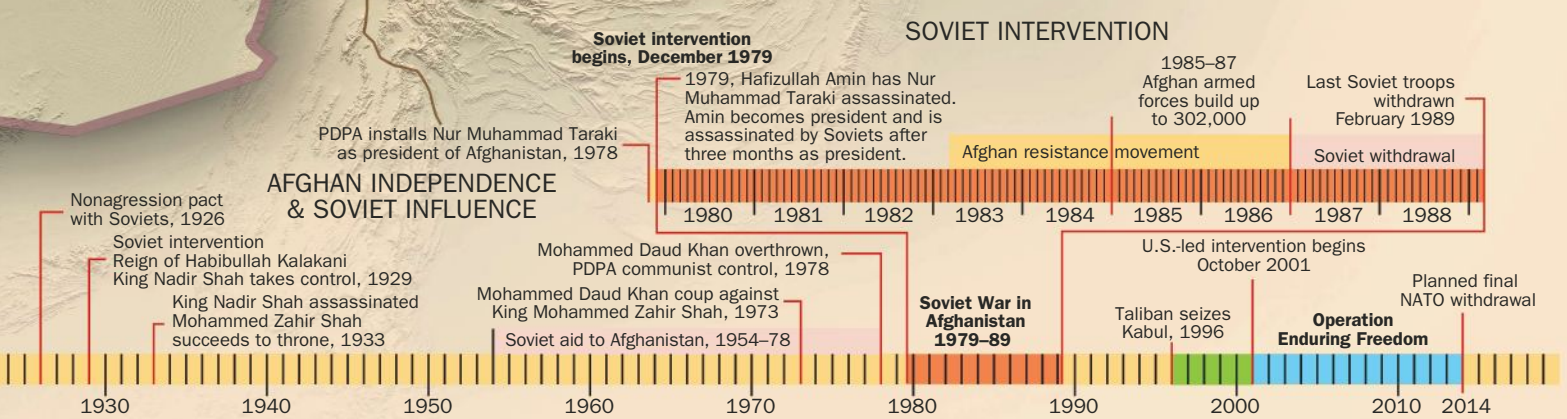
#### DISTANCES

Kabul to Kandahar:  
285 miles/459 km

Maps by Steve Walkowiak/SWmaps.com









Soviets had little choice. Afghanistan was not just an ally; it was a neighbor. It had a communist regime—which now controlled only 20 percent of the country—and Russians and Afghans had a long history of cooperation. The decision made, the Soviets' first act would be to eliminate Hafizullah Amin, whose ambition and viciousness seemed to have no limits.

Amin met his fate in the bar of the Tajbeg Palace just outside Kabul on the night of December 27 when a Soviet special forces unit stormed the building even as Soviet troops poured into the country. That night Moscow installed PDPA exile Babrak Karmal as Afghanistan's new president. He immediately instituted a purge of Amin's people, and the population was generally grateful: Amin, slaughterer of Afghans on a grand scale, was gone. To gauge the mood of the country, Soviet Embassy personnel spread out in Kabul and canvassed their Afghan acquaintances. The response, according to Braithwaite, went something like this: "We are glad to see you. But you will be very well advised to leave again as soon as you can."

Sound advice, but the Soviets ignored it. Braithwaite writes that a month after the Soviets moved in, the British Foreign Office gave a Soviet deputy foreign minister a historical account of the British experience in Afghanistan. The *apparatchik* responded, "This time it will be different."

He was wrong.

**T**he Soviets tried to institute the same kinds of reform in Afghanistan that Taraki and Amin had tried to institute. Moscow wanted stability, a Western style of law and order rather than blood feuds, which included the redistribution of agricultural land, education for women as well as men and universal literacy. The Soviets also wanted to train the Afghan army—and then get out, fast.

But Afghanistan is not a Western country, and the Afghan army is not a Western-style army. Its soldiers' loyalties lie above all with their families, clans, tribes and religion. They switched sides often as individuals, sometimes as whole units, when circumstances called for it, then switched back again. They were then—as they are today—quite capable of killing the foreign advisers with whom they worked so closely. The presence of *mujahedeen* saboteurs in the army, who helped in the April 1982 attack on Bagram air base, was nothing unusual.

This was guerrilla warfare of the most basic and brutal type. The enemy was elusive; during the decade-long conflict the Soviets launched repeated operations in the Panjshir

Valley to punish Ahmad Shah Massoud and his *mujahedeen*. As in Vietnam, frustration among the invaders built until it exploded. If Soviet forces were passing through a village and just one shot rang out, they would level it. Not a tactic likely to win hearts and minds.

It also proved hard to fight a war that did not lend itself to a narrative framework. The actions were all small, all more or less alike, and all indecisive. No Soviet soldier was able to say, "We have taken that valley—now we'll take the next, then the next, and the war will soon be over."

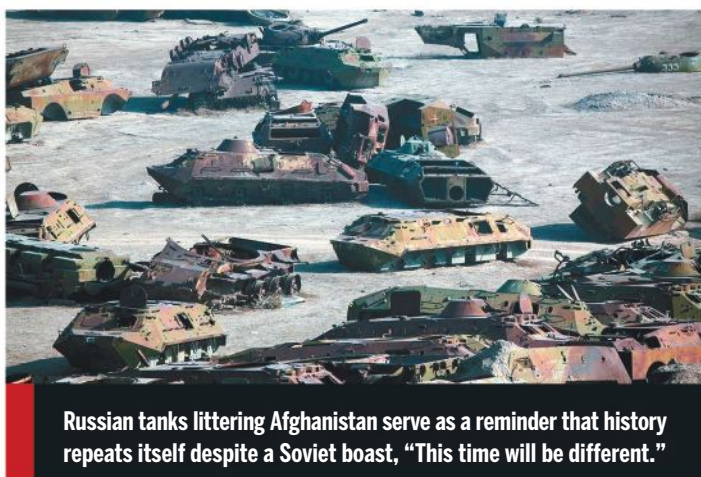
The Afghan fighters were vicious. They might fight with AK-47s or rocket launchers, but they beheaded Soviet prisoners with swords—after torturing them. They sold the officers—not all, to be sure—often to human rights groups in Europe. Braithwaite notes that one *mujahedeen* leader "made

a practice of half-skinning Russian prisoners after a successful ambush and leaving them alive, surrounded by booby traps, to catch the Soviet rescue teams." Soviet soldiers responded in kind by killing women, children, the old and feeble—all were seen as enemies. And all Afghans, except the hapless leaders in Kabul, wanted the Soviets gone.

The Afghans had yet another advantage; they were acclimated to the altitude,

and they knew the mountains as well as they knew their children's faces. Soviet commanders didn't even try to chase enemy units in the mountains. The Soviet strategy was to hold the cities and towns and keep the roads open. But at night the roads belonged to the *mujahedeen*. The Soviets controlled the skies, but the *mujahedeen* had weapons that could bring down helicopters, and they downed a great many of them, especially after the United States began to supply the *mujahedeen* with shoulder-launched, heat-seeking Stinger missiles.

But American involvement was only one of many factors in the ultimate Soviet defeat. Another was the enormous human cost the war tallied. The official count of Soviet dead was less than 15,000; veterans insist it was more like 75,000. On the Afghan side nobody knows, but estimates run to at least 1 million soldiers and civilians. Then there were the refugees: Out of a population of some 15 million, 5 million left the country, mostly for Pakistan and Iran, during the war. The displacement of one-third of the country's population had a major impact internationally. The Soviet people never supported the war, and they became increasingly loud in their protests. Their leaders did not want to go into Afghanistan, but once there they felt no choice except to stay. As the old leaders died out and new ones emerged, however, the reasons for staying seemed less and less compelling.



Russian tanks littering Afghanistan serve as a reminder that history repeats itself despite a Soviet boast, "This time will be different."

AKG IMAGES/HORIZONS





Ragtag but victorious *mujahedeen* rebels pose atop the scavenged hulk of a downed Russian Mi-8 helicopter in 1988. Although their war with the Soviets ended the following year, the Afghans continue to fight as other nations try their luck at taming the embattled country.

REX USA/NICHOLAS CRANE

Meanwhile, the fighting raged on. Heroes emerged from time to time on both sides. Ahmad Shah Massoud became a favorite of the Americans. The Soviets made heroes of the 39 men of 9th Company of the 345th Independent Guards Airborne Regiment, most of them young recruits, who defended a hill against an estimated 200–400 *mujahedeen* for a full day and a night, losing six dead and 28 wounded. Two of the dead were named Heroes of the Soviet Union, a recognition equivalent to the U.S. Medal of Honor.

**B**ut the Soviet war in Afghanistan was not heroic; it was senseless, as the country simply could not be stabilized. General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev announced his intention to pull Soviet forces from Afghanistan as early as 1985, but leaving wasn't easy. Gorbachev had to neutralize Kremlin hawks; he had to negotiate an agreement with the *mujahedeen* that would let the Russians leave with their honor intact; and he had to install a new government in Kabul—out went Karmal, in went Mohammad Najibullah, who had turned Afghanistan's KGB into a more efficient unit of the government. And a bridge had to be built, literally, over the river separating Afghanistan from Soviet Uzbekistan in the north, so the soldiers could ride out in dignity, which they finally did in February 1989.



**The war was not heroic; it was senseless, as the country simply could not be stabilized**

What did the Soviet war in Afghanistan ultimately accomplish? To put it bluntly, nothing. The civil war in which they had intervened continued after they left. The 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union ended the financial aid Moscow had been sending to Najibullah. Without aid his government collapsed as well, and in 1992 the *mujahedeen* took Kabul. Najibullah retreated to the United Nations headquarters in the city, where he lived until 1996, when the Taliban took over Kabul. They

took him from the U.N. compound, castrated him and dragged him to death through the streets behind a truck before hanging his body from a streetlight. Most Americans know what happened next: Taliban rule, a

safe haven for al-Qaida and the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, D.C., on Sept. 11, 2001.

Then came the U.S.-led intervention in Afghanistan. **MH**

*A frequent contributor to Military History and other national publications, Anthony Brandt is the author of The Man Who Ate His Boots: The Tragic History of the Search for the Northwest Passage (2010). For further reading he recommends Afgantsy: The Russians in Afghanistan, 1979–89, by Rodric Braithwaite, and The Great Gamble: The Soviet War in Afghanistan, by Gregory Feifer.*



**A LOOK AT THE WAR  
PHOTOGRAPHER'S  
WORK ON THE  
CENTENNIAL  
OF HIS BIRTH**

As the Spanish Civil War heated up in the summer of 1936, Robert Capa went to the battlefield with his Leica 35mm camera. Although he had covered Popular Front demonstrations in France, this was his first war. He photographed the chaos of the trenches and the hardships of refugees. His images from Spain's front lines were immediate and poignant, soon appearing in such top publications as *Life* and *Picture Post*, the latter of which dubbed Capa "the greatest war photographer in the world."


Capa was born Endre Ernő Friedmann in Hungary in 1913. His participation in leftist political demonstrations prompted his exile to Germany at age 17. He found a position as a darkroom assistant and soon learned

# CAPA



● A U.S. paratrooper of the 17th Airborne Division, opposite, stands geared up for a March 24, 1945, crossing of the Rhine River. Robert Capa, right, holding a Rolleiflex camera, waits to make his first jump into Germany with the division.

how to use a camera. By the autumn of 1933, having left Nazi Germany, Capa was pursuing photojournalism in Paris. His photos sold poorly, but with the help of his new business manager and girlfriend Gerda Taro, he reinvented himself as a "great American photographer" named Robert Capa. With the Capa credit line his impressive photos sold at double the price.

After Spain, Capa covered the Second Sino-Japanese War, World War II, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the French Indochina War. Known for getting daringly close to the action, the photographer cemented his reputation as an extraordinary war photographer. In 1954, after a brief hiatus, Capa accepted an assignment in Vietnam to fill in for a colleague. On May 25, while covering a French mission, he stepped on a Viet Minh antipersonnel mine. Capa died holding his camera. 







'The pictures are there, and you just have to take them. The truth is the best picture, the best propaganda'



● Three Spanish Republican riflemen take aim from a trench during the September 1936 offensive on the Nationalist-held city of Cordoba.

● A Chinese Nationalist soldier lays low during guerrilla training in 1938. Drills like these gave soldiers in rural areas much-needed practice.









● Facing resistance upon entering Leipzig, Germany, on April 18, 1945, an American soldier of the First Army intimidates captured German snipers.

● During the attack on Leipzig an American machine gunner lies dead in his balcony perch, killed by a sniper in the final weeks of the war in Europe.



'I climbed to the fourth floor to see if...it could be the last picture of war for my camera'









**'If your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough'**



● Italian Brig. Gen. Giuseppe Molinero, right, surrenders the city of Palermo to American Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Keyes in July 1943.

● Israeli soldiers—only one of whom appears to be wearing a helmet—seek cover in a trench from an Arab air raid during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.



# The Light Horse Takes Beersheba

In 1917 Australians made one of the last—and most successful—cavalry charges of World War I BY RON SOODALTER

We have seen and we'll remember  
till the dark approach of death  
Overmantles fond reflection  
and consumes the living breath,  
How the mounted men of Anzac  
bared the bayonet as they sped  
Hard a-gallop at the trenches  
through a hurricane of lead!

—Edwin Field Gerard,  
4th Australian Light Horse Brigade







Created by Australian sculptor Peter Corlett, this dramatic bronze statue commemorating the 1917 charge of the 4th Light Horse is the centerpiece of a small memorial in the modern Israeli town of Be'er Sheva.



## Be'er Sheva.

Thousands of years ago it was the site of several wells at the windblown, sandy foot of the Judaeen hills and, according to the Book of Genesis, the home of Abraham. The old patriarch and his son Isaac each made pacts with other men over the water here. Those treaties were immortalized in the place name (translated as “Well of the Oath”), which has come down through modern history as Beersheba. The settlement grew into a heavily garrisoned, strategic walled city before its glory faded and it crumbled into ruin.

In the looming dusk of Oct. 31, 1917, some 800 Australian mounted infantry of the 4th Light Horse Brigade looked from the crest of a ridge across nearly four miles of open, gently sloping ground at the fortified town that had grown up just west of the ancient ruins. This time the enemy was not Babylonians or Philistines, Assyrians or Herod's Edomites,

another potentially disastrous frontal attack, General Edmund Allenby, commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, adopted a plan to turn the flank of the Turkish defensive line at Beersheba and proceed along it to Gaza.

The operation began at dawn on October 31, when Allied forces attacked and systematically captured key strate-

*(b) seize as much water supply as possible in order to form a base for future operations northwards.*

Although the capture of the town itself was strategically crucial to the success of the plan, the seizure of its wells had become a much more immediate need. Some 50,000 to 60,000



**In what was then south-central Palestine (left), west of the Dead Sea, Beersheba in 1917 (above) was heavily garrisoned by Ottoman Turk troops.**

but the Turks, eastern allies of imperial Germany. And once again it was about the water.

In the British forces' struggle to take Palestine, two earlier attempts to capture the strategically vital Mediterranean coastal city of Gaza had ended in costly failure. Since then the Ottomans and Germans had heavily reinforced the city. The Turkish line, supported by troops of the seasoned German Asia Corps, stretched along a nearly 27-mile-long fortified front, extending from Gaza southeast to Beersheba. Rather than risk

gic Turkish positions around Beersheba. By late afternoon, however, the town itself remained firmly in enemy hands. Knowing that success depended on seizing Beersheba that same day, Australian Lt. Gen. Sir Harry Chauvel, commanding the Desert Mounted Corps, ordered the 4th Light Horse Brigade to circle around to the rear; from there they were to stage a mounted attack and capture the town, along with its 17 vital wells. Chauvel's orders were simple:

*(a) Attack Beersheba from the east so as to envelop the enemy's left rear and*

Allied troops were marching toward Beersheba under the brutal desert sun; the heat and dust were oppressive, and the lack of water had become critical for men, horses and machines. Unless the Allies could procure water quickly and in quantity, the entire British effort would be doomed to failure. As was the case 4,000 years before, the only wells for miles in any direction were at Beersheba.

Only two of the 4th Light Horse's three regiments—the 4th, from Victoria, and the 12th, from New South Wales—would charge the Turkish





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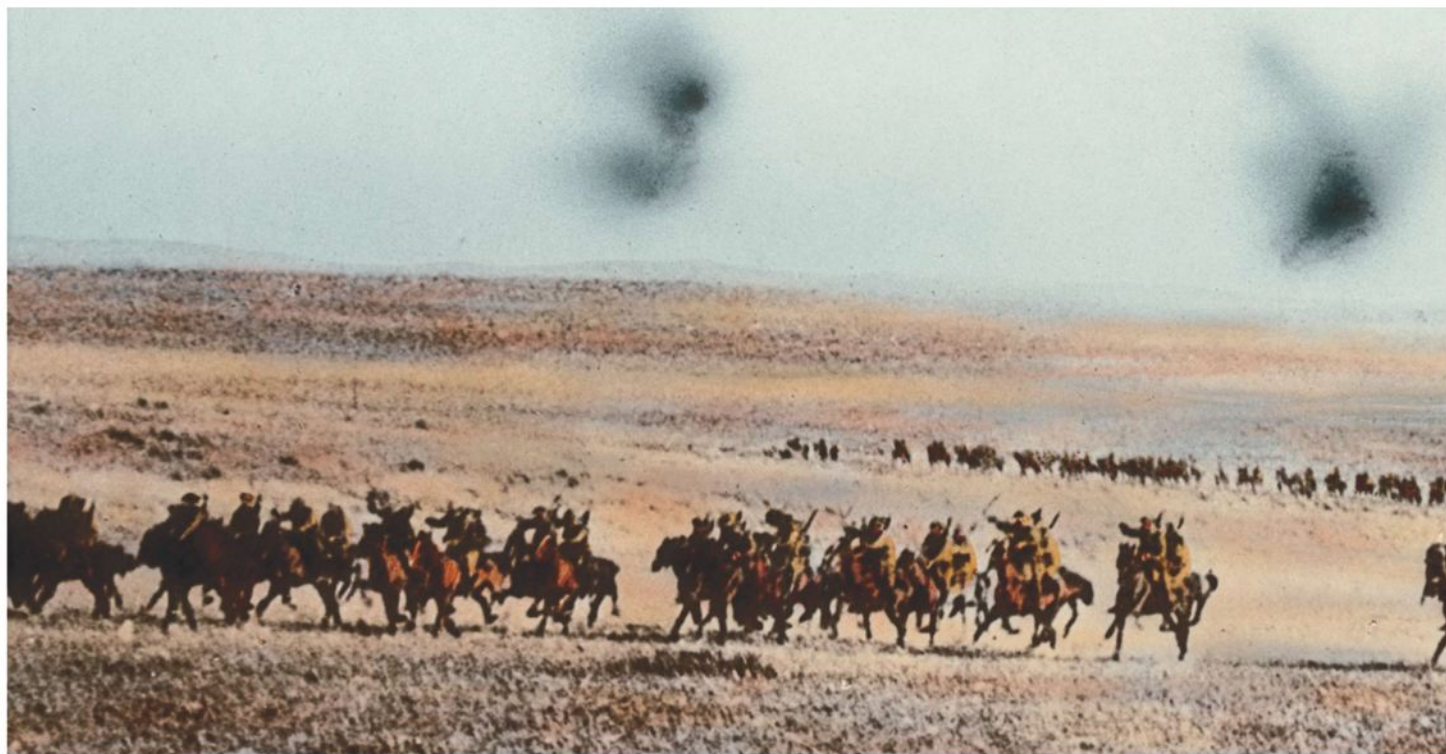
Horse-drawn artillery of Britain's Yeomanry Mounted Division moves through Wadi Saba during a reconnaissance before the Beersheba attack.



AMERICAN COLONY, JERUSALEM/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Beersheba's defenders were entrenched and prepared for the coming attack. Above, Turkish lancers and artillery await the first Allied assault wave.





While the photo on which this hand-colored print, titled *The Charge of the Light Horse at Beer-sheba*, was based was said to have been captured from

position. The 11th Regiment, on detached duty at the time, was ordered to saddle up and follow the 4th and 12th into Beersheba when ready. Although British artillery would support the 800 charging horsemen, more than 1,100 Turkish riflemen, nine field pieces and several machine guns protected Beersheba's eastern defenses. Well-placed Turkish redoubts and a double row of trenches commanded excellent fields of fire, and the roughly three miles the horsemen would cross afforded no cover whatsoever. It was an order that must have struck many of the Australian troops as ill-advised, if not suicidal. But time was of the essence, and it was the only strategy that stood a chance of success.

The light horsemen were not, in the conventional sense, cavalry; they were mounted infantry. Taking a page from the Boers, against whom the Australians had fought in South Africa years earlier, they traditionally used their horses to carry them swiftly to the fight and aid in rapid withdrawal. They carried neither lances nor sabers and fought on foot, using rifles and bayonets. Once engaged, one man in four was respon-

sible for leading and holding the horses out of harm's way.

At the time of the Sinai and Palestine Campaign, the Australians fielded five light horse brigades, each comprising three regiments. Their mounts were specially selected and bred for endurance. Standing no more than 16 hands (5 feet 3 inches), they were called "Walers," for their New South Wales origins, and they made consummate warhorses. Walers were the result of crossbreeding and showed a considerable thoroughbred strain. They could go from a walk to a canter without entering a trot and were able to cover great distances without feed or water. The soldiers' lives regularly depended upon their horses, and the bond between man and animal was strong. The men of the 4th Light Horse Brigade were not concerned that their horses might not be capable of covering the expanse of hot, dusty ground that lay before them; their focus was on the guns at the far end of their ride.

**B**y 4:30 the sun had nearly set, and it was rapidly growing dark. As 4th Light Horse Trooper John "Chook" Fowler later recalled:

*I heard some remarks: "It's getting too late now to do anything," etc., and when we were beginning to congratulate ourselves on our good fortune for the day, the order was given: "B Squadron, all pack-horses to the rear. Remainder prepare for action."... We had heard that order many times and knew what it meant. A tingling feeling ran down my spine.*

At the order the two regiments—the 4th on the right and 12th on the left—walked off the ridge and down onto the plain. They rode in three successive lines, 300 yards apart. Each man was ordered to ride with drawn bayonet—with its gleaming 18-inch blade it closely resembled a short sword. The men deployed into artillery formation, keeping a distance of five yards between each man to minimize the potential carnage from cannon fire or aerial bombardment. Almost immediately they spurred their mounts into a trot, then a canter and finally a gallop, shouting at the top of their lungs and waving their bayonets overhead.

Working in their favor was the fact that neither the Turks nor their German





FRANK HURLEY/AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL - P05380.C01

a Turkish soldier, it was later proven to be a re-enactment, staged in February 1918 for Australian Frank Hurley, the official Allied cinematographer.

officers and advisors had anticipated such an attack. Accustomed to fighting mounted infantry, the officers ordered their troops to hold fire until the enemy dismounted. The horsemen, however, gave no indication of slackening their pace, as they spurred their Walers over the ground toward Beersheba at break-neck speed.

Artillery shells soon began bursting over and in front of the Australians, the shrapnel killing horses and emptying saddles. After what seemed an eternity, the light horsemen galloped inside the Turkish gun range, and the shells burst harmlessly behind them. When they closed to within 800 yards of the enemy's trenches, the Turkish rifles and machine guns opened up and began to take a toll. One Turkish machine gun emplacement atop a ridge fired on the men of the 12th with

deadly effect, but well-directed British artillery quickly silenced it.

As Trooper Fowler recalled:

*The artillery fire had been heavy for a while. Many shells passed over our heads, and then the machine gun and rifle fire became fierce as we came in closer to the trenches.... No horseman ever crouched closer to his mount than I did.*

Unnerved at the screaming apparitions galloping out of the red dust and coming dark, many of the Turkish riflemen had failed to adjust their sights and fired high, unwittingly saving countless Australian lives. In his after-action report Brig. Gen. William Grant, commanding the 4th Light Horse, wrote, "The rapidity of the attack seemed to demoralise the Turks, as they mostly fired high, and it

was afterwards found that the sights of their rifles were never lowered below 800 metres."

The Turks did shoot or bayonet a number of horses as they leaped over the trenches. The light horsemen dismounted once within the Turkish lines, and the hand-to-hand fighting became intense. After galloping into Beersheba, Trooper Fowler discovered one bullet hole in his haversack and two more through his trousers.

The 12th Light Horse Regiment War Diary and Routine Orders for the day present a straightforward, unemotional account of the bold cavalry charge and its aftermath:

*The Regiment moved on Beersheba at the gallop. Heavy enemy rifle and machine gun fire developed on the left flank.... This fire was silenced by artillery. The leading Squadron came under very heavy rifle fire and machine gun fire from the trenches.... On reaching a point about 100 yards from these trenches, one Troop of A Squadron dismounted for action, and the remainder of the Squadron galloped on.... The Regiment, less 1 troop, kept straight on to Beersheba.*

**“They spurred their mounts into a trot, then a canter and finally a gallop, shouting at the top of their lungs and waving their bayonets overhead”**

Barely an hour had passed from the time the two light horse regiments first rode onto the plain until they subdued the troops in the Turkish trenches.

As ordered, the light horsemen captured the village and secured the wells. When defeat appeared inevitable, the enemy commander had ordered the wells destroyed, but the horsemen managed to save all but two. Nearly all the Turks surrendered immediately, although, according to the regimental orders, “about 60 of these enemy, including 3 officers, tried to escape but were intercepted by a troop of our ‘C’ Squadron and taken prisoners.” Re-

the Australians had seized nine field guns, five machine guns and, the orders continued, “a large quantity of various war materiel, including rolling stock, transport vehicles and animals.” By the next morning tens of thousands of men and animals had slaked their thirst with the water from Abraham’s ancient wells.

Although the butcher’s bill was comparatively light given the nature of the operation, the action had not been without cost. At least 70 Walers died, while dozens more were hurt. And of the 800 men who rode against the Turkish guns, 31 were killed and 36 wounded. “The

re-enactments. Over the past century sculptors have crafted a multitude of statues honoring the light horsemen, none as dramatic as the larger-than-life bronze that graces the Park of the Australian Soldier in the Israeli city of Be’er Sheva. Sculpted by Australian Peter Corlett, it was dedicated jointly in 2008 by then-president of Israel Shimon Peres and Maj Gen. Michael Jeffery, governor-general of Australia. It depicts a mounted Light Horseman leaping the sandbags at the Turkish trenches. An emu plume graces his slouch hat; he clutches the reins in one hand and a gleaming bayonet in the other. The statue and the park in which it stands pay tribute to the impossible mounted charge that, by initiating the removal of the Turkish military presence from Palestine, paved the way for establishment of the state of Israel.

Some historians have referred to the action as the last cavalry charge of modern times; it was not. Horsemen on both sides would charge the guns during World War II. However, the Australian Light Horse’s headlong assault on the Turkish trenches at Beersheba was one of the most startling and inspiring triumphs in a seemingly endless war with more than its share of bloody debacles. Mounted infantrymen, brandishing only bayonets, had carried the field in the face of entrenched rifle, machine gun and artillery fire, and in the process they had gained immortality. As one light horseman and bush poet later recalled:

*We marched away at the close of day  
to mount in the dying light:*

*We rode aflank through the tense,  
grey gloom with plenty of sad, spare  
saddle-room—*

*The swift hoofs sounded a roll of doom  
to the Turkish arms that night! MH*

Ron Soodalter, a former columnist for America’s Civil War, has also written for Smithsonian, Civil War Times and Wild West. For further reading he recommends Chauvel of the Light Horse, by A.J. Hill, and Light Horse: The Story of Australia’s Mounted Troops, by Elyne Mitchell.

“When defeat appeared inevitable, the enemy commander had ordered the wells destroyed, but the horsemen managed to save all but two”

portedly, one dazed German field officer commented on his captors’ bold, headlong charge: “They are not soldiers at all; they are madmen.”

After rounding up their captives, the 4th and 12th regiments—now joined by the 11th—established defensive positions in anticipation of a counter-attack from the southwest. They held the positions until daylight. As the orders recorded:

*The picquets in the vicinity of the pumping station were withdrawing at 2300 [11 p.m.] when Brigade Headquarters arrived and took over. A patrol of 1 NCO and 8 men was sent out at 2300 and made a reconnaissance in a south-west direction, returning at 0300 [3 a.m.], bringing in 23 prisoners and reporting, “All clear.”*

The success of the charge had depended upon speed and surprise—and the men of the 4th Light Horse Brigade had accomplished both. The victory was complete; the wells and town of Beersheba were securely in Allied hands. As Grant wrote, “The number of prisoners captured is 59 officers and 1,090 other ranks.” In addition,

high percentage of killed to wounded,” Grant wrote, “was due to the hand-to-hand fighting against superior numbers at the trenches. The majority of the wounded fell before the trenches were reached.”

But the capture of Beersheba altered the course of the war for the Holy Land. The 4th Light Horse Brigade victory was a decisive factor in the battle for Gaza and helped lay the groundwork for Allenby’s victorious entry into Jerusalem less than two months later. According to the records of the Australian Light Horse Studies Centre, the victory at Beersheba “opened the way for the whole Turkish defensive line to be outflanked and rolled up from east to west.”

By 1942, in the early stages of another world war, much of the Australian Light Horse had ceased to function as a mounted unit, trading in their Walers for tanks and armored cars. But Australians in Canberra and other cities and towns still celebrate Beersheba Day, commemorating the October 31 charge of the 4th and 12th Light Horse regiments with parades, wreath-laying ceremonies and





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Australian troops water horses and camels after Beersheba's capture. Lack of water earlier in the campaign had killed many of the Allies' animals.



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The swift capture of Beersheba spared the city—and its vital wells—from the destruction visited on Gaza, above, during two failed British assaults.

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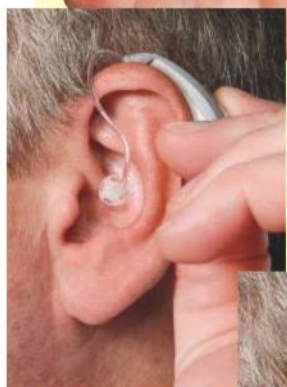
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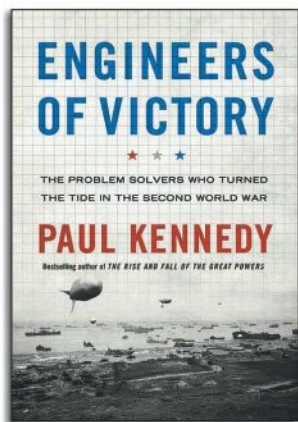
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## Winning the Problem-Solving War



*Engineers of Victory: The Problem Solvers Who Turned the Tide in the Second World War*, by Paul Kennedy, Random House, New York, 2013, \$30

Few people realize that North American Aviation originally designed its famed P-51 Mustang with an underpowered engine that limited its usefulness

as a combat fighter. That changed when a British test pilot by the name of Ronnie Harker suggested outfitting it with the more powerful Rolls-Royce Merlin 61. With the Merlin in place, the P-51 became one of the most capable fighter aircraft of World War II.

In *Engineers of Victory* author Paul Kennedy argues that in wartime such small changes can have a big impact. He highlights five situations—the Battle of the Atlantic, the air war, defeat of a blitzkrieg, invasion of an enemy shore and the obstacle of distance—to explain how Allied military forces combined engineering know-how with better tactics to gain the advantage during World War II.

Achieving air superiority was one of the primary factors that helped the Allies gain and maintain the upper hand. One hurdle they faced was range, as bombers and fighters were limited in their reach. Solution: Extend the range of aircraft through the use of external drop tanks and other means. During the Battle of the Atlantic, the

Allies managed to neutralize Germany's lethal U-boats through the use of long-range bombers as convoy escorts, providing cover from above. By combining air superiority with advanced naval weaponry—such as the tube-launched Hedgehog anti-submarine weapon, improved depth charges and radar—the Allies kept their edge in the theater through war's end. A similar story played out in the Pacific.

Kennedy also stresses the importance of improved organization and communication. Before Operation Overlord—the June 1944 invasion of France—the Allies had mounted amphibious invasions at Dieppe and in North Africa with mixed results. Allied leaders realized the need for a central command in order to orchestrate

the chaos of such landings. That goal came to fruition on D-Day, as a joint command structure, anchored in intelligent planning and clear communication, won the battle.

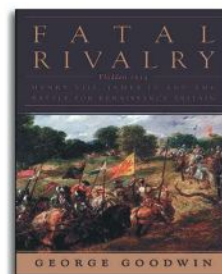
Kennedy's central thesis is that success in World War II depended on such multidisciplinary coordination. One must assess the engineering improvements and tactical changes in context, as one without the other could have led to a drastically different outcome. His book makes a convincing argument about the powerful role Allied problem-solving played in World War II.

—Chris Kelly

*Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counterinsurgency*, by Colonel Gian Gentile, The New Press, New York, 2013, \$24.95

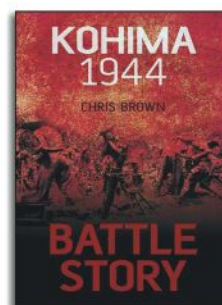
The Iraq War was going badly in 2007 when President George W. Bush sent a surge of additional troops into theater and appointed General David Petraeus commander of Multi-National Force–Iraq. A major figure in establishing the U.S. Army's new counterinsurgency doctrine, Petraeus applied it, turned matters around and placed America on the path to victory. That's the official version, not what actually occurred, according to Colonel Gian Gentile, Iraq War veteran and professor of mil-

## RECOMMENDED



*Fatal Rivalry*, by George Goodwin

Released to coincide with the 500th anniversary of the September 1513 Battle of Flodden, this fast-paced history underscores the rivalry of brothers-in-law King James IV of Scotland and King Henry VIII of England, which culminated in the largest Scottish invasion of England and the Scots' embarrassing failure to seize full independence.



*Kohima 1944*, by Chris Brown

The latest volume in The History Press' *Battle Story* series explores the Battle of Kohima, a turning point in Japan's effort to secure the Burma-India border that ended in the siege of Imphal. This excellent summary features mini profiles, a time line of events, and a thorough examination of tactics and weapons.

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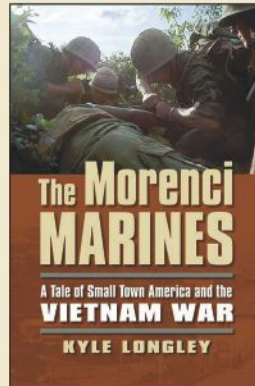
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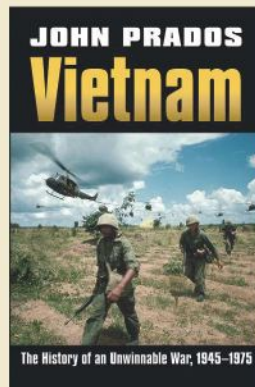
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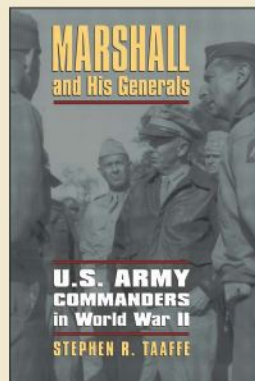
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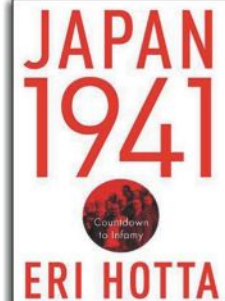
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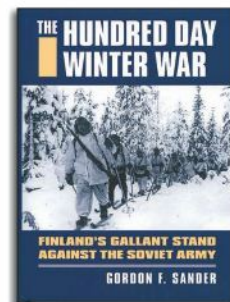
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## RECOMMENDED



**Japan 1941,**  
by Eri Hotta

Why would Japan enter a war it knew it was bound to lose? Hotta turns the table to deliver a well-researched, rare glimpse into that nation's actions and motivations from the perspective of its politicians, diplomats and military elite in the lead-up to the December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.



**The Hundred-Day Winter War,**  
by Gordon F. Sander

This David-and-Goliath story chronicles the Soviet Red Army's unexpected defeat by the Finnish army during the November 1939 Winter War. The author's clear and direct take on the 105 days of combat touches on such lesser-known details as the role of the *Lotta Svärd*—the Finnish women's auxiliary unit.



itary history at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

Counterinsurgency theory teaches that during civil disorder a tiny minority in any population supports the government, a similar minority the insurgents, and the majority remains neutral but can be won over by protecting them, solving their problems and winning their trust.

Gentile argues that counterinsurgency warfare is not new, and even if applied effectively, it's an expensive, long-term tactic that produces more, not fewer, civilian casualties. It does have limited uses, but as a dominant strategy it leads to interminable wars—which Americans never tolerate. Counterinsurgency operations were not responsible for the diminished violence

in Iraq, and few deny its receiving ineffective lip-service in Afghanistan.

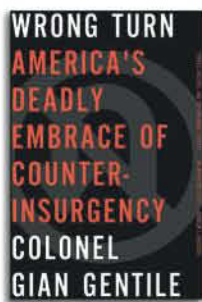
Gentile makes his case in four astutely argued chapters. In everyone's favorite insurgency, Malaya (1948–60), the British did not try to win peoples' hearts and minds. They locked them into fortified camps, successfully isolating the guerrillas.

Despite the narrative that the United States rushed into Vietnam, guns blazing, hoping to defeat the Viet Cong with superior firepower, Gentile maintains that pacification was a goal from the start and persisted throughout the American presence. It failed because the South Vietnamese government never won its people's trust.

Violence diminished in Iraq in 2007, says Gentile, largely because al-Qaida

(not a native Iraqi movement) exasperated Sunni insurgents, who turned against it, and because Shia government and military factions decided to stop fighting each other. Now the Shia and Sunni go at it absent the United States and with al-Qaida marginalized. No one claims we have built a nation in Iraq, which remains faction- and violence-ridden, and the subsequent much-hyped transfer of surge, counterinsurgency and Petraeus to Afghanistan has faded from the news.

Gentile insists there is less to counterinsurgency than meets the eye, except for generals and politicians anxious to explain why our recent wars have gone so badly. This remains a minority view, but (three wars and counting) it's debatable whether reinvented armies practicing counterinsurgency under imaginative generals



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can rescue wars that arguably should never have been fought in the first place.

—Mike Oppenheim

*Going for Broke: Japanese American Soldiers in the War Against Nazi Germany*, by James M. McCaffrey, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2013, \$34.95

In *Going for Broke*, Vol. 36 in UOP's *Campaigns and Commanders* series, James McCaffrey seeks to present the full World War II history of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. After the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the National Guard formed the 100th Infantry Battalion, comprising Hawaiians of Japanese descent—even as the

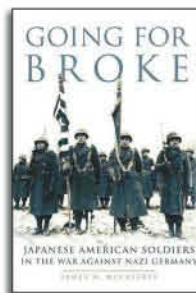
U.S. government herded Japanese Americans into stateside internment camps. Eventually, reason returned to the Army, which noted that the 100th Battalion had displayed not a hint of disloyalty. Consequently, on the first day of 1943 Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall approved the creation of a Nisei (the term for children born in America to Japanese immigrant parents) regimental combat team. The mostly Japanese-American personnel included prewar draftees, volunteers from Hawaii and even recruits from the internment camps. The officers were Caucasian. Since the 100th Battalion had already fought as part of 34th Infantry Division, it was absorbed into the 442nd Regimental Combat Team when the latter finally arrived in Italy.

In the fall of 1944 the 442nd was attached to the 36th Infantry Division fighting in southern France and the Vosges Mountains. In the spring of 1945 the combat team was broken up. The organic artillery battalion stayed with Seventh Army, while the rest of the team was assigned to the 92nd Infantry Division for the final push into the Po Valley.

By the war's end the 442nd's soldiers had received more than 50 Distinguished Service Crosses, hundreds of Silver Stars and thousands of Bronze Stars and Purple Hearts. That made it quantitatively the most decorated U.S. Army unit in World War II, with one exception—none of its men received the Medal of Honor during wartime. One was awarded a posthumous Medal of Honor in 1946, and in 2000 President Bill Clinton awarded the medal (upgraded from other awards) to 20 additional veterans of the 442nd RCT.

*Going for Broke* is a comprehensive overview for anyone interested in the Japanese-American soldiers' struggle, not only against their German enemies but also to gain acceptance as equals among their fighting countrymen.

—Thomas Zacharis



## GAMES

*History: Legends of War—Patton*, by Maximum Games, 2012, \$49.99 (Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, PlayStation Vita, Windows/PC)

In this iteration of *History: Legends of War* you assume the role of General George S. Patton during his European campaign.

This strategy game focuses on squad-based military tactics, with light role-playing thrown in to customize units and command styles. The 18 unit types comprise infantry, armor and aircraft. Mission completion grants Patton "prestige points," with which you can recruit new units, heal the wounded, repair damaged vehicles or upgrade units. You'll also earn skill points, with which you can tweak your unit strategy and tactics.

While its turn-based format is better suited to earlier periods, the game should appeal to Patton buffs and strategy gamers.

—Ryan Burke





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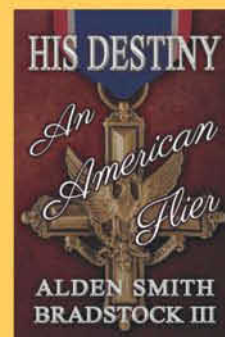
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# Hallowed Ground

## Lake Trasimeno, Italy

By David T. Zabecki

**L**ago Trasimeno is the largest lake on the Italian peninsula. It abuts the Umbria-Tuscany border roughly between the ancient city-states of Perugia and Siena. The surrounding countryside is bucolic and peaceful. More than 2,200 years ago, however, it was the site of one of the classical era's bloodiest battles.

At the outset of the Second Punic War (218–201 BC) between Carthage and Rome, the Carthaginian commander Hannibal Barca invaded Italy from Spain by boldly marching over the Alps in the fall of 218 BC with a force of some 20,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry. That winter, while Hannibal rested his troops in the Po River valley and recruited local reinforcements, his spies reported the Romans were fielding two new armies against him under the consuls Gaius Flaminius, with some 30,000 troops, and Gnaeus Servilius Geminus, with 20,000.

By early spring 217 BC Hannibal was ready to strike, while the consular armies moved to block the two main roads leading to central Italy and Rome—Servilius on the west coast at Ariminum (present-day Rimini), Flaminius on the Etruscan plain at Arretium (Arezzo). Hannibal drove south to Bononia (Bologna), seemingly oblivious of the waiting Roman armies, then made a surprise crossing of the snowcapped Apennine Mountains. Descending onto the Etruscan plain, the Carthaginians struggled through the treacherous marshes around the Arno River, generally considered impassable during spring flooding. Rapid-

ly moving south, Hannibal veered around Flaminius' left flank to threaten Rome. By ravaging the surrounding countryside, he hoped to draw the Roman consul into battle. Recognizing the threat to Rome, Flaminius took the bait and pursued. Hannibal, meanwhile, deployed a cavalry force to block any support elements Servilius might send.

Late on June 20 Hannibal and Flaminius made camp along the north shore of Lake Trasimeno. Hannibal had set his trap on terrain ideally suited for a large-scale ambush. The hills north of Trasimeno form a punchbowl around a flat plain stretching some four miles along the lakeshore. East and west of the plain the semicircular ridgeline runs almost to the shore. The Roman camp was near the northwest shore, just outside the entrance to the punchbowl. The Carthaginian main camp was in the hills to the east, overlooking the plain.

Hannibal now had more than 50,000 troops, including some 10,000 cavalry. During the night he concealed his forces in the forested hills ringing the plain. The west entrance to the plain was a narrow defile that ran between the lake and the high ground. There Hannibal con-



**While this 16th century painting depicts Hannibal's forces deploying before the battle, it is unlikely any of his war elephants had survived the trek through the Arno marshes.**





© PETER NOYCE/ALAMY

**The Lake Trasimeno battlefield—among the best-preserved of the classical era—includes a commemorative sculpture park.**

cealed heavy cavalry and infantry to seal off the killing ground after the Romans passed through the defile.

Early on June 21 Flaminius, believing himself in pursuit of a rapidly fleeing enemy, pushed his troops through the defile with no reconnaissance and no advance or flank guards. Even the weather conspired against the Romans, as a heavy fog rolled in off the lake to conceal the surrounding hills. The lead elements passed through the defile and marched onto the plain along the lakeshore. Nearing the east end of the plain, they made contact with a Carthaginian blocking force. Assuming he had caught Hannibal's rear guard, Flaminius sent word back to close up the column. The Romans pressed forward until the entire force was within the punchbowl. Only then did Hannibal spring the trap.

The Carthaginians attacked simultaneously from all sides, hitting the Romans so hard and fast that even the units on relatively open ground had no time to deploy into battle formation. Hannibal's onrushing men cut down the Romans before they could draw their swords, while his heavy cavalry overwhelmed the Roman elements still in

the defile. Driven into the lake, many legionaries drowned under the weight of their armor.

The carnage lasted more than three hours. By the time it was over 15,000 Romans lay dead, including Flaminius, and 5,000 had been captured. Some 10,000 managed to escape into the hills, eventually taking news of the great defeat back to Rome. Hannibal's losses amounted to some 2,500 killed. Little more than a year later, on Aug. 2, 216 BC, Hannibal handed the Romans another punishing defeat, at Cannae, a battle that still fires the imagination of military tacticians.

The battlefield at Lake Trasimeno, a two-hour train ride from Rome, is one of the best preserved of the classical era. A hiking trail around the perimeter of the field takes about three hours to complete. One segment follows the stretch of ancient Roman roadway over which Flaminius and his troops marched through the western defile to their doom. Note that the lake itself has receded from the level it was in Roman times, thus the gap between the hills and the shore presented Flaminius and his ill-fated legionaries with an even tighter bottleneck than that which appears today. **MH**

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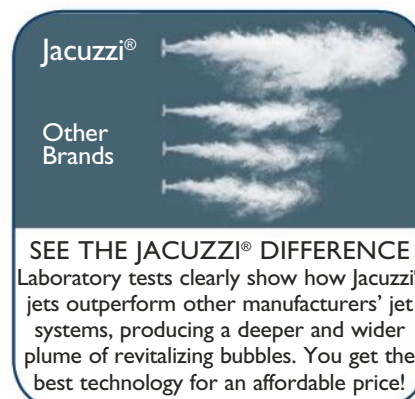


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# War Games



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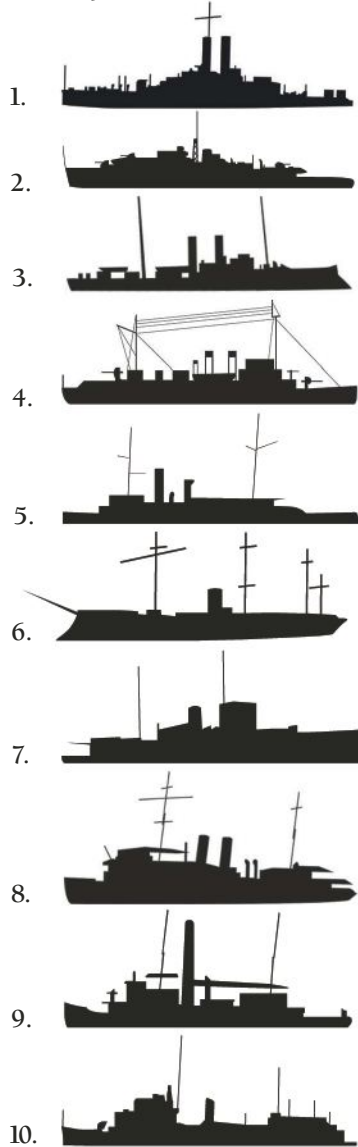
1. Macedonian Companions
2. 1st Virginia Cavalry
3. Prussian 12th Cavalry Brigade
4. James Scarlett's Heavy Brigade
5. 21st Lancers
6. Joachim Murat's Cavalry Corps
7. 1st Polish Light Cavalry of the Imperial Guard
8. 5th U.S. Cavalry
9. Polish Hussars
10. 26th U.S. Cavalry

- \_\_\_ A. Omdurman, Sept. 2, 1898  
 \_\_\_ B. Somosierra, Nov. 30, 1808  
 \_\_\_ C. Gaines' Mill, June 27, 1862  
 \_\_\_ D. Morong, Jan. 16, 1942  
 \_\_\_ E. Chaeronea, Aug. 2, 338 BC  
 \_\_\_ F. Vienna, Sept. 12, 1683  
 \_\_\_ G. Eylau, Feb. 8, 1807  
 \_\_\_ H. Balaclava, Oct. 25, 1854  
 \_\_\_ I. First Manassas, July 21, 1861  
 \_\_\_ J. Mars-la-Tour, Aug. 16, 1870

Answers: A5, B7, C8, D10, E1, F9, G6, H4, I2, J3

## Slow Gunboat to China

They passed like shadows. Identify the following warships on the China Station by their silhouettes:



- \_\_\_ A. Kaiserin Elisabeth (Austria-Hungary)  
 \_\_\_ B. Jaguar (Germany)  
 \_\_\_ C. Panay (United States)  
 \_\_\_ D. Amethyst (Britain)  
 \_\_\_ E. Koriets (Russia)  
 \_\_\_ F. Cockchafer (Britain)  
 \_\_\_ G. San Pablo (United States)  
 \_\_\_ H. Sumida (Japan)  
 \_\_\_ I. Francis Garnier (France)  
 \_\_\_ J. Lepanto (Italy)

Answers: A5, B3, C8, D2, E6, F1, G9, H10, I4, J7



## For King and Country

Ben Franklin's son, William (P.34), wasn't alone in turning his back on the Patriots. Identify the following Tories.

1. Who, after suffering a skull fracture and being burned, scalped, tarred and feathered by Patriots in Georgia, formed and led the King's Rangers against them?  
 A. John Butler    B. Simon Girty  
 C. Thomas Brown    D. John Johnson
2. Escaped slave turned British paramilitary officer Colonel Tye led the Black Brigade from 1778 to 1780 in which state?  
 A. North Carolina    B. New Jersey  
 C. Virginia    D. New York
3. Who gained notoriety for reputedly turning against the Patriot cause because of his preference for the American Indian way of life?  
 A. John Butler    B. John Johnson  
 C. Joseph Brant    D. Simon Girty
4. Who formed the King's Royal Regiment of New York and rose to brigadier in British service?  
 A. John Johnson    B. Thomas Brown  
 C. John Butler    D. Edward Jessup
5. After leaving the Continental Army to join the British, what islands did Colonel Andrew Deveau retake for Britain in April 1783?  
 A. Tortugas    B. Bahamas  
 C. Virgin Islands    D. Trinidad and Tobago

Answers: C, B, D, A, B

# Captured!



## WHEN TANKS FLY

A World War II-era American M3 medium tank takes to the air after crossing an obstacle at high speed during evaluation of the vehicle's suspension system at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., in 1941. What goes up...



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